

THE STHĀNIKAS AND THEIR HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

1. ANTIQUITY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE OFFICE OF STHĀNIKA

The earliest historical mention of the importance of the Sthānikas is in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭalya. Whatever may be the use to which the root *sthā* (denoting place, position, station, etc.), from which is derived the word *sthānika*, is put by classical writers,¹ it is only when we come to the time of Kauṭalya (321-300 B. C.) that we have definite evidence of the important position held by the Sthānikas in the civil administration of the State. Kauṭalya uses the words *sthāna*, *sthāniya*, and *sthānika* in different contexts, but generally in connection with an office or place. The word *sthāna* is used by him while explaining the question of war and peace and neutrality, thus:—“*Sthāna* (keeping quiet), *āsana* (withdrawal from hostility), and *upekṣana* (negligence) are synonymous with the word *āsana* (neutrality).”²

This, however, is not the primary meaning of the words *sthāna* and *sthānika*. Kauṭalya speaks of a *sthāniya* in the sense of a fortress. “There shall be set up a *sthāniya* (a fortress of that name) in the centre of eight hundred villages, a *droṇāmukha* in the centre of four hundred villages, a *khārvāṭika* in the centre of two hundred villages, and a *sanghrahana* in the midst of a collection of ten villages.”³

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1. Mr. N. S. Shiva Rao of Puttur (S. K.), whose interesting paper in Kannada, entitled *Sthānika-prajñāna*, a copy of which is with me, gives some examples of the use of the root *sthā* (which with the tense *lyuṭ* and the suffix *than* gives us the word *sthānika*) from early times, e. g., *Rg Veda* (maṇḍala 1, ad. 2, sūtra 7), *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (pr. 1, va. 1) Pāṇini, Amarasimha, Halāyudha, etc. While these examples no doubt establish beyond doubt the use of the word *sthāna* in contexts denoting position, place, dignity, etc., they do not help us to elucidate the position held by the Sthānikas in the Hindu State. This part of Mr. Shiva Rao's paper shows signs of much industry, but the latter part is devoid of any historical value. B.A.S.
 2. I am aware of the fact that some scholars would place Kauṭalya's work anywhere between the second and sixth century A.D.—B.A.S.
 3. *Kauṭalya, Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II. Ch. I. 46, p. 44. (Shama Sastry's ed. 1924)

Perhaps Kauṭalya uses the word *sthānīya* here in the sense it was used by Manu, who tells us that the word *sthānaka* means "the pickets of soldiers commanded by a trusted officer placed in the midst of two, three, five, or hundred villages."⁴ Both Manu and Kauṭalya, therefore, are inclined to associate the words *sthānaka*, *sthānīya*, with an important office, but attached to the military department.

Indeed, Kauṭalya further associates the word *sthānīya* with a prominent civil office as well, as is shown in the following context:—"In the cities of *sangrahaṇa*, *droṇāmukha*, and *sthānīya*, and at places where districts meet, three members acquainted with Sacred Law (*dharmasthas*) and three ministers of the king (*amātyas*) shall carry on the administration of justice."⁵

This is not all. The most conclusive proof of the official status of a Sthānika is seen in those passages in the *Arthasāstra* in which a Sthānika is always classed together with a Gopa, both being endowed with definite civil and criminal duties. Thus, for instance, while dealing with the formation of villages, Kauṭalya states the following:—"Superintendents, accountants, Gopas, Sthānikas, veterinary surgeons (*anīkasthas*), physicians, horse-trainers, and messengers shall also be endowed with lands, which they shall have no right to alienate by sale or mortgage."⁶

The duties of the officials called Gopa and Sthānika are enumerated thus in the *Arthasāstra*:—"It is the duty of gopa, village accountant, to attend to the accountant of five or ten villages, as ordered by the Collector-General"⁷. This does not end the work of the Gopa. He was to set up the boundaries of villages, number plots of grounds as cultivated, uncultivated, plains, wet lands, gardens, vegetable gardens, fences, forests, altars, pasture grounds, roads, register gifts, sales, charities, remission of taxes, and he was to number houses as tax-paying and non-tax-paying, and do quite a lot of work pertaining to the sphere of the Revenue Collectors.⁸

Turning to the Sthānikas we find the following in the *Arthasāstra*:—"Likewise (*i. e.*, like a Gopa) Sthānika, district officer, shall attend to the accounts of one-quarter of the kingdom."⁹

4. *Manu*, VII. 114, p. 234. (S.B.E.)

5. *Kauṭalya*, *ibid.*, Bk. III. Ch. I. 148, p. 167.

6. *Ibid.*, Bk. II. Ch. I. 47, p. 46.

7. *Kauṭalya*, *op. cit.*, Bk. II. Ch. XXXV. 142, p. 158.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Then, again, in a later context Kauṭalya classifies the Gopas and the Sthānikas thus:— "A Gopa shall keep the accounts of ten households, twenty households, or forty households. He shall not only know the caste, *gotra*, the name, and occupation of both men and women in those households, but also ascertain their income and expenditure".¹⁰

The Sthānikas and the Gopas were to be in direct touch with the Manager of Charitable Institutions. "The Managers of Charitable Institutions shall send information (to Gopa or Sthānika) as to any heretics (*pāṣaṇḍa*) and travellers arriving to reside therein."¹¹

But the State did not give unlimited authority to the Gopas and the Sthānikas; nor did it completely trust them in financial matters. This accounts for the fact that supervisors and spies were placed over the Gopas and the Sthānikas. In one context while dwelling on the duties of the Revenue Collectors,—such as the Gopas and the Sthānikas essentially were,—Kauṭalya lays down the following:—"In those places which are under the jurisdiction of Gopa and Sthānika, Commissioners (*pradeśtrāḥ*) specially deputed by the Collector-General shall not only inspect the work done and means employed by the village (Gopa) and district (Sthānika) officers, but also collect the special religious tax as *bali* (*bali pragraham kuryuḥ*)."¹²

Then immediately afterwards Kauṭalya says that "Spies, under the guise of householders (*grhapatika*, cultivators), who shall be deputed by the Collector-General for espionage, shall ascertain the validity of the accounts (of the villa Gopa and district [Sthānika] officers) regarding the fields, houses, and families of each village, the area and output of produce regarding fields, right of ownership and remission of taxes with regard to houses and the caste and profession regarding families."¹³

Under the *pradeśtrāḥ* or Commissioners, the Gopas and the Sthānikas had to do the policing of the country as well. For Kauṭalya informs us that "A Commissioner with his retinue of Gopas and Sthānikas shall take steps to find out external thieves; and the officer in charge of a city (*nāgaraka*) shall, under the circumstances sketched above, try to detect internal thieves inside fortified towns."¹⁴

10. *Ibid*, Bk. II. Ch. XXXVI. p. 160.

11. Kauṭalya, *op. cit*, p. 161.

12. *Ibid*, p. 159.

13. *Ibid*, p. 159.

14. *Ibid*, Bk. IV. Ch. VI. 217, pp. 244-245. It is in this sense of a protector that the word *Gopī* is used in the Junagadh inscription of

The conclusion deducible from the above statements in the *Arthaśāstra* are the following:-

1. That a Sthānika, like his colleague Gopa, was always entrusted with an important office in the civil administration;
2. That he was generally a District Officer;¹⁵
3. That his duties were generally those pertaining to the collection of revenue;
4. That sometimes in the capacity of a District Officer he had to do the work of a police officer as well; and
5. That Commissioners were most often placed over both the Gopas and the Sthānikas.

While, therefore, the official status of a Sthānika is thus proved beyond doubt in the *Arthaśāstra*, nowhere is the word Sthānika ever associated with a community or a caste. What is more important is that Kauṭalya does not make Sthānikas exclusive managers and trustees of temples and temple lands. Moreover, there is another detail mentioned above to which attention may be drawn. Kauṭalya explicitly states that, as we have seen just now, the Sthānikas and the Gopas, were to be endowed with lands, but that these lands could not be alienated or mortgaged by them.

In these two details, *viz.*, that pertaining to the alienation of endowed lands by sale or mortgage, and that relating to the exclusively revenue character of the Sthānikas, later historical practice completely transgressed earlier legal precept. The association of a Sthānika with an important office continued to exist ages after Kauṭalya; but whereas formerly a Sthānika was connected with the collection of revenue, in later historical times, a Sthānika was entrusted more with the managership of the lands around temples and with similar duties of trustees which were not entirely devoid of a financial tinge. This was inevitable in the course of the evolution of the Hindu State. For both the Hindu State and society had considerably altered since the days of Kauṭalya; and with the ever-growing demands of the State, need was naturally felt for appointing separate officials to look after the revenue (and police) work, while the Sthānikas were charged with the duty of controlling temples, temple lands, and the like. But whether in the age

Skandagupta (5th century A.D.)—"sarveṣu deśeṣu vidhāya goptṛiṇ saṁcintayāmāsa." Fleet, *Corp. Ins. Ind. III. Gupta Ins.*, pp. 59, 62.

15. The Sthānika or District Officer is to be distinguished from the Chief of a District (*rāṣṭramukhya*) mentioned by Kauṭalya in a later context *Ibid* Bk. IX. Ch. III. 347, p. 375.

of Kauṭalya or in later times, the Sthānikas never formed a caste or community by themselves. Indeed, Kauṭalya does not tell us anywhere to which community the Sthānikas belonged. For to him they were merely officials recruited evidently from the highest classes of society. It seems to us that it was only in our own times that the Sthānikas were classified under the denomination of a caste, more by the machinations of those who were divided from the Sthānikas by religious tenets, rather than by any conscious and deliberate attempt on the part of the Sthānikas to style themselves as a caste. To understand the validity of our statement, we shall review the position of the Sthānikas in later times, basing our remarks mostly on the innumerable stone and copper-plate inscriptions, the value of which can never be over-estimated, supplemented to some extent by notices of Sthānikas in literature.

2. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE STHĀNIKAS AND OTHERS CONNECTED WITH TEMPLES

But before we proceed to cite epigraphic and literary evidence in regard to the position of the Sthānikas, it is desirable that we should differentiate the Sthānikas from others who held similar positions but without the powers and privileges of the former. These others were the Goravas, the Tammaḍigaḷ, the Śaiva temple servants, the Nambis, and others about whose duties and inferior position in Hindu society we have ample evidence in epigraphs.

(a) THE GORAVAS WERE NOT THE SAME AS STHĀNIKAS

The word Gurava or Gorava is a *tadbhava* of the Skt. *guru + aḍi* meaning the Foot used in the honorific sense like *pāda* in Sanskrit.¹⁶ The idea underlying the word Gorava, therefore, seems to be the following—That a Gorava was one who was “at the feet of the Guru or Lord” in a temple. This meaning is by no means identical with that of the word Sthānika which, as we have seen, connotes dignity, office, place, etc. However, the position held by Goravars and Sthānikas sometimes coincided. The earliest reference to the Goravar is in one of the Śambhukallu temple stone inscriptions found at Udayāvara, the ancient capital of the Ālupas in Tuḷuva (mod. South Kanara). We have fully described the importance of this record while delineating the history of the Tuluva country. The last two lines of this record

16. *Epigraphia Carnatica*, II. No. 5, p. 3, and *ibid.*, p. n. (1)

end thus—*Sakaḷa-Śrī-āḷgaḷ Goravar*. These Goravars, therefore, who were at the feet of the Lord (*Śrī-āḷgaḷ*) of the temple of Udayāvara, had already become well known in the reign of the Ālupa king Māramma Ālvarasar, who reigned in A. D. 575.¹⁷

The Goravars are also mentioned in inscriptions found at Śravaṇa Belgola. These records have been assigned to A.D. 700. One inscription relates that Tirthada Goravaḍigal (or the Goravar, *guru* of the *tīrtha* or holy place), having observed the vow (ended his life). Another records the same fact concerning Uḷikkal-goravaḍigal of the same date.¹⁹ A third epigraph also of the same date relates that Guṇasena Guravar of Koṭṭara, the disciple of Moni (Mauni?) Guravar of Agali died in the orthodox manner.²⁰ And a fourth one assigned also to the same date records the death of Dhaṇṇakuttāreṇi Guravi, the female disciple of Perumāḷu Guravaḍigal.²¹

From the above records the following conclusions may be drawn:— First, the word Goravar was connected with a *tīrtha* or a holy place. Secondly, females obviously “at the feet of the Lord” in such holy places, were called Guravis. And, finally, the term Goravar, or Guravar, was applied to Jainas as well, as the name Guṇasena Guravar clearly proves.

Of these the first conclusion concerning the association of a *tīrtha* with a Goravar is borne out by later records, one of which (dated Śaka 872 = A. D. 949–950) asserts that the Goravars managed the *sthāna*.²² This is further substantiated by another inscription dated A. D. 814 which makes a Gorava ruler of a *sthāna*.²³ In an inscription dated A. D. 950 a Goravar is made the manager of a temple.²⁴ These facts, it may be presumed, are sufficient to justify the identity of the Goravars with the Sthānikas.

But on a closer examination this identity vanishes. It is true that so far “ruling a *sthāna*” was concerned, both the Goravars and the Sthānikas held an identical office. Both were priests (attached mostly to Śaiva temples), and both were concerned with

17. Salestare, *Ancient Karnataka* I. pp. 82, 176, 385.

18. *E. C.* II. p. 3.

19. *Ibid.*, No. 6, p. 3.

20. & 21. *E. C.* II. nos. 7-8, p. 3.

22. *Epigraphia Indica*, VI. p. 56, and *ibid.*, n. (7)

23. *Ibid.*, VII. p. 200 seq.

24. *E. C.* III. Md. 41, p. 42. For other examples, see *E. I.*, XII. p. 290; *Indian Antiquary*, XIX, p. 271; *E. I.*, XIX, p. 150; *E. C.* IX. Ht. 110, p. 112.

duties pertaining to temples. But throughout Karnāṭaka history the Goravas have never been confounded with the Sthānikas. In the first place, these latter, as we shall prove later on in the course of this paper, had definite social status which was denied to the Goravars. Secondly, while the Goravars no doubt were, like the Sthānikas, sometimes said to "rule a *sthāna*", they were never entrusted with elaborate duties concerning the ownership of lands which were associated only with the Sthānikas. And, finally, the State in Karnāṭaka, especially in the fourteenth century and after, invariably assigned to the Sthānikas a place in the civil administration of the country which was never given to the Goravars. These considerations, therefore, make it impossible for us to identify the Goravars with the Sthānikas.²⁵

As to how the Goravars came to claim the lordship of *sthānas*, it is not possible to say at the present stage of historical research. We can only suggest, however, that in the early days of struggle between Brahmanism and its rival creeds like Buddhism and Jainism—the leaders and priests of which were certainly not always drawn from the Brahman community—, those associated with the ownership of holy places, on the decline of the non-Brahmanic religions in the early centuries of the Christian era, naturally became "the rulers of the *sthānas*", when these latter passed into the hands of the Hindus. Such transference of office is not unknown to the history of southern and western India. We shall see later on in the course of this paper, that the Sthānikas themselves in comparatively recent times were dispossessed of their rights, privileges, and lands by their rivals the Vaiṣṇavites in certain parts of southern India. And we have shown elsewhere that the Jainas were driven from the predominant position they had held in western India, their *basadis* having been converted into Hindu temples, and in some instances, the pedestals of Jaina images being used for Hindu gods!²⁶ It is not improbable, therefore, that in the early ages when Hinduism succeeded in ousting rival religions, the priests of the latter, on their promising allegiance to the Hindu gods, were permitted to continue as "rulers of *sthānas*", which had definitely passed into the hands of the Hindus. These are no doubt conjectures; but what appears certain is that, notwithstanding the identity of the office of "rulers of the *sthānas*" which the Goravars and the Sthānikas held, these

25. In view of these facts, my identification of the Goravas with the *Sthānikas* (A. K. I, pp. 80, 90, n (1), 385) is to be rectified.—B.A.S.

26. Read my *Medieval Jainism*, Bombay.

latter were never considered to be the former, especially in Karnāṭaka and the Tamil land where, as numerous epigraphs amply prove, the Sthānikas had definite duties, privileges, and powers which were never given to the Goravars.²⁷

(b) THE STHĀNIKAS WERE NOT THE SAME
AS THE TAMMAḌIGAL

There is another class of minor temple servants whose position outwardly resembled that of the Sthānikas. These were the Tammaḍigal or attendants on the temple images. The term Tammaḍigal, like the term Gorava, is of some antiquity. Two stone records found at Kammarahaḷḷi, Guṇḍlupēṭ taluka, Mysore State, and assigned by Rice to A.D. 750, speak of Guṇasāgara Tammaḍi of Āralūr-gaṇāvaḷi, to whom the Twelve (representatives) of Ariūr made over certain grants of villages (named).²⁸

It seems as if we are to infer from the above example that a Tammaḍigal, like a Gorava and a Sthānika, was "a ruler of the *sthāna*". But there is definite evidence to prove that the Tammaḍigal were not the same as the Sthānikas. The Māgēna-ḥaḷḷi stone inscription, Chennapaṭṭaṇa taluka, Mysore State, dated A.D. 1318, is of particular importance in this connection. It falls within the reign of the last great Hoysala ruler Vīra Ballaḷa III. His House-minister (*maneya pradhāna*) the *Mahāmaṇḍa-leśvara* Somarasa granted Mūguvanahaḷḷi in Keḷavalanāḍ to Ciṭṭāri Bala Śeṭṭi and Masana Śeṭṭi by means of a stone *sāsana*. The *sāsana* was as follows :—That in Mugulanahaḷḷi (evidently the same as that mentioned above) if there is a Tammaḍi, the elder brother's property will go to the younger brother, and the younger brother's property to the elder brother. If there is no elder or younger brother, the nearest relatives and children by the female servants will have the chief claim. If there are none such, the childless one's cattle will be given to the temple. If there is no provision (required) for a Tammaḍi, without payments (specified) or any others, free of all imposts, a fair will be established in that Mugulanahaḷḷi as a city for the Nānādeśis", to continue in perpetuity.²⁹

27. The Goravars are commonly supposed to be Śudra priests. Banerjee, *Prehistoric and Ancient India*, p. 37; *History of Orissa*, I. p. 239. Havell connects Ghārāpuri (and the name for Elephanta) with the Guravars. *Ancient and Mediaeval Architecture*, p. 157. I found Goravas in and around the well known temple at Āḷandi, near Poona, still claiming that they were the original masters of that temple !—B. A. S.

28. *E. C.* IV. Gu. 88, 89, p. 50

29. *Ibid.* IX. Cp. 73, p. 146.

Although it is not clear what precisely is meant by the last statement relating to the establishment of a city for the merchant-guilds called the Nānādeśis, yet it is evident from the above regulations pertaining to the law of inheritance among the Tammaḍigal, that these were classed among the (female) servants of a temple a position which was never given to the Sthānikas in any period of Indian history. There is one more consideration which may be noted here. The above order was passed during the reign of king Vīra Ballāla III. Now as we shall show in a later context, that monarch as well as his great officers knew very well the importance of the Sthānikas in the Hoysala Empire. The fact that in the Māgenahallī stone inscription the Tammaḍigal are not confounded with the Sthānikas is very significant. It shows that in the fourteenth century A.D. the Sthānikas enjoyed powers and privileges which the Tammaḍigal were denied. For the Tammaḍigal were of the same inferior position in a temple as the Paḍiyālār, Dēvaraḍiyār, and Iṣabhattaliyār, who were to be found, for instance, in the southern temples like those at Tiruvōḍḍiyūr.³⁰

(c) THE STHĀNIKAS WERE NOT TEMPLE SERVANTS

There were other temple servants called variously Śīva Brahmans, Jīyas, or Jīyangūḷu, Pūjāris, Nambis, and quite a number of others. The Sthānikas cannot be classed with any of these servants of an inferior position. The numerous temple servants are mentioned in stone inscriptions concerning the State regulations of the southern Coḷa monarchs. One such record dated about A.D. 1071 of the reign of the king Rāja Rāja, contains allotments of allowances to an army of temple servants among whom the Sthānikas do not figure.³¹

The Śīva Brahmans were distinct from the Sthānikas. We have many epigraphs which contain details about the status and duties of the Śīva Brahmans. The Maḍivāla Pārvati temple stone inscription, Bowringpēṭ tāluka, Mysore State, dated A.D. 1228, deals with the Śīva Brahmans. It is related in this inscription that three Śīva Brahmans (who are named, their *gotras* being Gautama and Bharadvāja), having received six *poṇṇ*, pledged themselves to provide a daily offering of one *nāḷī* of rice in

30. Read *Epigraphical Report of the Southern Circle* for 1913, p. 127, for the specific duties of this class of temple servants. In an undated inscription found in the Rāmēśvara temple at Hebbastūr, Yedatore tāluka, Mysore State, Kāva Tammaḍi of Marāla (descent stated) is mentioned in connection with the building a temple by the Ēḷkōṭi Dāsa. *E.C.* IV. Yd. 44, p. 58).

31. *E.C.* X. Kl. 106 (d), p. 33; See also Kl. 108, of A.D. 1071, pp. 36-37.

perpetuity, from the interest of the above sum (*viz.*, six *poṇ*), granted by Tantripālan, one of the king's servants, for the goddess Pārvati. This was in the reign of the king Jayangoṇḍa Śōḷa Ḥavañjiya Rāyan.³²

Another record also found in the same place and falling within the reign of the same Tamil ruler, but dated A. D. 1231, contains the following:- That the same royal servant Tantripālan (descent stated) granted one perpetual lamp to be burnt at the *tiruppurakkūḍai* within the temple of Svayambhū-Nāyanār, and as a fund for maintaining it gave nine *poṇ*. And the Śīva Brahmans (three named with their *gotras*) of the temple, having received the above sum, pledged themselves to burn the lamp in perpetuity.³³

One more stone record refers to the same temple of Śvayambhū-Nāyanār, who is called in this inscription Śeyambhū Nāyakar. This epigraph is dated A. D. 1261. In it we are told that Śeyambhū Nāyakan (descent stated) granted certain specified lands to provide for the daily offerings of rice (specified) and for two twilight lamps in the same temple. This charity was made over to three Śīva Brahmans (named) of the temple who pledged themselves to conduct the charity³⁴.

In the reign of the same Tamil monarch, Śeṭṭālvai, the daughter of *Brahmādhiraḷja* Śelvāṇḍai and consort of Śīruvasudevar, who was the son of the king Jayangoṇḍa Śōḷa Ḥavañjiya Rāyan, granted one perpetual lamp for the god Svayambhū Nāyanār, and gave ten *poṇ* for its perpetual maintenance. Three Śīva Brahmans (named with their *gotras* Gautama and Bharadvāja) received the ten *poṇ*, and pledged themselves to maintain the perpetual lamp, from the interest on the sum at the rate of one *pāgam* (cf. *hāga* in Kannada) on each *poṇ*.³⁵

What precisely was the position which the Śīva Brahmans held in the temple organization of those days is shown by another stone inscription also of the reign of the same Tamil king Jayangoṇḍa Śōḷa Ḥavañjiya Rāyan. It is dated about A. D. 1280. This ruler had built the temple of Jayambhū-Nāyakar (Svayambhū Nāyanār ?), which he had richly endowed with gifts of lands together with provision for the maintenance of the

32. *E. C. X. Bp.* 37 (a), p. 145.

33. *Ibid.*, Bp. 35 (a), p. 144.

34. *Ibid.*, Bp. 38 (b), pp. 146-147.

35. *Ibid.*, Bp. 32, p. 143.

following fifty-two families of temple servants, who had to perform various duties in the temple. The fifty-two families were as follows:- four Śiva Brahmans including the Śaivacāriyin, five drummers including the dancing master, twenty-four dancing girls, one singer of the *Tiruppadiyam* (Tamil hymns in praise of Śiva), one stage manager to have the sacred drama acted, twelve families of Brahmans for repeating prayers... and for conducting services, one gardener for the temple gardens, two families of potters, and one temple accountant.³⁶

A few more instances will enable us to determine the position of the Śiva Brahmans in society. Veṭṭumappāra Bānan, the son of Uttama Śōḷa Gangan Vira Gangan, the supreme lord of the city of Kuvalāla, and a descendant of the Ganga family, (with other titles), granted in about A.D. 1280 certain specified lands to provide for the offerings (named) in the temple of Tōriśvaram-Uḍaiya-Nāyanār at Poṟkundaṁ in Kuvalālanāḍu. He also granted some taxes (named) to the Śiva Brahmans and the other servants of the temple (*ikkōyilil Śiva Brahmaṇaṟkum nimandakūṟaṟkum* etc.)³⁷ It may be observed here that the Sthānikas are not classed among the temple servants in the above inscriptions.

Five years later (A. D. 1285) three Śiva Brahmans (named with their *gotras* which were Gautama and Bharadvāja) of the same Svayambhū Nāyanār pledged themselves to supply perpetually a specified quantity of rice for the offerings of the god, out of the interest on the sum of four *poṇ* given by Vayirāṇḍai, the son of one of the Vellāḷa residents of Pūḍavūr in Iḷavañjināḍ, at the rate of one *pāgm* per month on each *poṇ*.³⁸ In the same year (A. D. 1285) the Śiva Brahmans of the same temple pledged themselves to burn a perpetual lamp from the interest on four *paṇam* which had been given as a gift by Śīru-nāyan, the son of Vāṇakkirai Uḍaiyar Śokka Nāyan, the lord of the city of Kañci.³⁹

The Śiva Brahmans had, therefore, the following duties to perform:- They provided for daily offerings in a temple; they pledged themselves to burn perpetual lamps, to conduct charities given by princes and peoples; and to supply specified offerings of rice for gods in temples. There is one fact in the above

36. *E. C. X.* Bp. 38 (a), p. 146.

37. *Ibid.*, Bp. 55, p. 149. Cf. *ibid.*, IV. Ng. 38 dated A. D. 1284 where the Sthānikas are not included among the temple servants. P. 123.

38. *Ibid.*, X. Bp. 29, p. 142.

39. *Ibid.*, Bp. 30, p. 142.

epigraphs which stamps the Śiva Brahmins as temple servants of an inferior nature. In one of the records cited above they are classed together with the dancing master, dancing girls, potters, and the like, thereby proving that they were of the same low social rank as these latter temple servants. The Sthānikas, as we shall see, were decidedly of higher and more respectable status.

We may add here that the term *Jīya*, which was one of respect, was applied to the Sthānikas as well as to other higher priests in temples, as in about A.D. 1216.⁴⁰ But the name *Nambi* used in the Tamil land and in the Āndhradeśa,⁴¹ and the term *Pujari*⁴² which was common in Karnaṭaka as well, were not applied to the Sthānikas, who, in their capacity of worshippers in temples, no doubt performed the duties of priests. The term *Arcaka* was distinct from the term *Sthānika*, as is proved by a record dated A.D. 1564. This inscription relates that Cikka Rāya Tamma Gauḍarayya, a nobleman, granted three villages (specified) to the *Arcaka* Nīlakaṇṭhayya and his posterity. This was granted in connection with the gift of the village Mugubāḷu which Cikka Rāya had made for the offerings of his gods *Somésvara* and *Virabhadra*.⁴³ Since in the sixteenth century, as we shall amply prove in a later context, the people as well as rulers were well aware of the existence of Sthānikas, and since in the above record the latter term is not applied to Nīlakaṇṭhayya, we are to suppose that the people never confounded a Sthānika, who was essentially a high official, with an *Arcaka*, who was merely an ordinary priest conducting the worship in a temple.

Indeed, the Cennakésava temple stone inscription found at Hiri-Kaḍalūr, Hāssan tāluka, and dated about A.D. 1443, clearly proves that the temple servants had separate names, and that the people never identified the Sthānikas with them. This record relates the following:—That Gōvaṇṇa, and Ballaṇṇa the sons of Śrīrangadeva of Araṇipura in Kaḍalūr, along with the Sthānikas Késava Piḷḷe and others (named), made a gift of specified land for the offerings of the god Cennakésava. The various temple servants mentioned in the record are the following:—The *Nambi*, who was to get six *gadyāṇa*; the *paricāraṇa*, who was to get three *gadyāṇa*; the bearers, who were to receive five *gadyāṇa*; the gardener, who was to get three *gadyāṇa* and the cook who was to receive five *gadyāṇa*. These and other details were written with the approval

40. *E. C.* VI. Kd. 137, p. 26.

41. Butterworth-Chetty, *Nellore Inscriptions*, III. p. 1064.

42. *Ibid.*, II. p. 622

43. *E. C.* IX. Ht. 94 p. 98.

of both parties (one party being the donor, the other being the Sthānikas) by the Senabova of the town, Singanna, who was also the Sthānika priest of the Mūlasthāna god. The Sthānikas were to continue in perpetuity and undisturbed the worship in the temple. (*ā Kēsava dēvarige adhikāriyāgidda Lingarasara Mādaṇṇa muntāgi yī Sthānikarige ācandrārka pariyanta naḍavant-āgi koṭṭa-sāsana.*)⁴⁴

3. WHO, THEN, WERE THE STHĀNIKAS ?

We have now to enquire who were called Sthānikas. The Sthānikas were known by various names in historical records. They were called Sthānācāryas, Sthānāpatis, Sthānattār, or Tāpattār, Sthānādhipatis, or merely Samsthānakulu. In the reign of the Coja monarch Rāja Rāja III (A.D. 1216-?), the Sthānikas were called Tāpattār.⁴⁵ A stone record dated only in the cyclic year Pingala and found in the temple of Tiruvorriyūr in the Saidapet taluka, Chingleput district, registers an order of Tāpattār of the same temple assigning the quarters called Nārppattēṇṇāyir-apperunderuvu for the exclusive dwelling of sculptors and artisans.⁴⁶ The Sthānikas were the priests and trustees of the Śrisundarapāṇḍya Īśvaram-Uḍaiya temple in the Pudukōṭṭai State.⁴⁷ The temple trustees of the Viṣṇu temples in the Tamil land were called Sthāpattār.⁴⁸

In the Āndhradeśa the Sthānikas were called Sthānādhipatis, or Sthānapantulu, or Samsthānakulu. Thus, the Rāmalinga temple stone inscription found at Mannūru (or Maḍanūru) in the Nellore district, and dated Śaka 1033 (A.D. 1111-2), affirms that on the specified date Gosanayya, the son of Vireḍḍi, presented five *gadyāṇa* for a perpetual lamp in the temple of Rameśvaradeva at Ītamukkala. This charity was entrusted to the charge of Śimā Bhaṭṭa, the Sthānādhipati of the same temple; and it was declared that he and his descendants should burn the

44. E. C. V. Hn. 82, pp. 25-26.

45. Ep. Rep. of the S. Circle for 1923, p. 107

46. 204 of 1912; Rangacharya, *A Topographical List of Inscriptions in the Madras Presidency*, I. p. 451. It is difficult to verify this date. See 55 of 1908; 381 of 1902; 31 of 1909 for references to the temple of Nārppattēṇṇāyira Viṇṇigar.

47. Burgess-Natesa Sastri, *Tamil & Sanskrit Inscriptions*, I. p. 51, n. (5)

48. Ep. Rep. of S. Circle for 1913, p. 85; Nilakanta Sastri, *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, p. 9. As managers of temples, the Sthānikas may be compared to the *koyilkelvis* for whom see 380 of 1912 dated Śaka 1437 (A.D. 1515-16)

perpetual lamp in succession.⁴⁹ In Śaka 1077 (A.D. 1155-6), according to the stone inscription found at Bollavārapāḍu, Nellore district, all the *mahājanas* (*i. e.*, Brahman burgesses) of the illustrious Duyyālareyūru gave ten *puṭṭis* of land in the field of the god Rameśvara to Mādajiya, who was the Sthānāpati of the temple of Śiva, for providing worship, offerings, lighting, enjoyment, and decorations of the god Rameśvara, in perpetuity.⁵⁰ The Sthānāpantulu of the Mallesvara temple at Nāgaluppalapāḍu, Nellore district, were Māra Jīyyalu and his younger brother Bhaira Jīyyalu. These two sthānikas received the endowment of specified lands presented by Mādhava Nāyaka when he had consecrated the temple mentioned above in Śaka 1161 (A. D. 1239-1240). They were to carry on the work of providing oblations, offerings, and worship of the above god from the revenue of the lands entrusted to their charge, in perpetuity.⁵¹ There are many such instances of Sthānikas or Sthānāpantulu, or Sthānādhipatis, or Sthānāpatis, who, in the middle and latter part of the thirteenth century A. D., were the custodians of the lands which were given as gifts to temples, and from the revenues of which they were to provide for the daily offerings, worship, etc., of the gods in the temples.⁵²

We may now proceed to give a few examples of Sthānāptis or Sthānāpatigalu in Karnāṭaka. The Sangameśvara temple stone inscription found at Sindhaghaṭṭa, Krishnarājapēṭe tāluka, Mysore State, and assigned to A. D. 1179, relates how the Sthānikas co-operated with the Brahmans in the matter of selling endowed lands. The Brahmans, who are called Mahājanas, belonged to the immemorial *agrahāra* of Sangameśvarapura *alias* Sindhaghaṭṭa, while the Sthānāpatis belonged to Mācanakaṭṭe *alias* Bijjaleśvarapura. The Sthānikas and the Brahmans together sold to Male Nāyaka for eighty-five *gadyūṇas* certain specified land belonging to the gods Sangameśvara and Janneśvara in Sindhaghaṭṭa, reserving

49. Butterworth-Chetty, *Nellore Ins.*, III, p. 1045. These editors always wrongly translate *Sthānādhipatis* as temple servants. Rangacharya copies this blunder. *Ibid*, III, pp. 1991 and *passim*. Obviously these writers must have been led to commit this mistake by the erroneous nature of the interpretation of the word Sthānika given in Government Publications to which reference will be made at the end of this paper.—B.A.S.

50. Butterworth-Chetty, *Nellore Inscriptions*, II, p. 926. The editors wrongly interpret Mahājanas as elders.—B. A. S.

51. *Ibid*, III, p. 1059.

52. *Ibid*, III, pp. 1009, 1030, 1046, 1047, 1082, 1083, 1148, 1157, 1163, 1168, & 1323.

for themselves the amount payable for the offering to the god Sangameśvara.⁵³

Although the above is one more instance of the flagrant breach of the injunction of Kauṭalya pertaining to the sale of endowed lands, yet it affords another example of the Sthānikas being of the same status as the Brahmans.

Tripurāntakadeva, the son of the king Irungōḷa Coḍa Mahārāja, was ruling from Hāniyādurga in A. D. 1262. The Amarapura stone inscription Sira tāluka, Mysore State, which contains the above detail, relates that Tripurāntakadeva granted in that year certain lands to Rudraśakti, the son of Uttava Jīya, and the Sthānāpati of the temples of the gods Govindeśvara and Rāmanātha Mūlathāna of Tayilangere in the Sirenād, evidently for performing the worship and decorations in the above temples.⁵⁴

The Kōyil-sthānāptikkaḷ of the Rāmeśvara temple of the Durgā agrahara in Yeḷandūr Jāgir, Mysore State, was Ālvān Bhaṭṭa, the son of . . . Bhaṭṭa, of the Gautama *gotra*. Both he and Ummai Ammai, Periyakka, and another lady, all of whom were the wives of Śivabalam Uḍaiyar, with their sons, grandsons, and grand-daughters, together with the *pañca-sthānāpatikkaḷ* Rāja Rāja Bhaṭṭa, made a grant of land to Kunniñeca Piḷḷai. This damaged stone inscription found in the Lakṣmī Narasimha temple at Agara, Yeḷandūr Jāgir, tells us that Rāja Rāja Bhaṭṭa was the Sthānāpati of the seven towns and five temples of Rājarājapura *alias* Talaiakāṭu (Talakaḍu) in Vaḍakaraināḍu.⁵⁵

In about A. D. 1425 Bijjaḷeśvarapura *alias* Mācanakatte figures again in a sale deed effected by Revuḷa Malleya, the son of the Sthānāpati Cikka Malleya Nāyaka of Bijjaḷeśvarapura, to Cakravarti Bhaṭṭopādhyāya, the son of Rājarājaguru Viṣṇu Bhaṭṭaiyanga. This sale deed concerned about fifteen houses, certain specified cocoanut and arecanut plantations, and specified lands which were the private property of the Sthānāpati, as is evident from the last lines of the epigraph which dwell on the consent of the wife, sons, relations, and heirs of the donor being taken before the sale deed was effected.⁵⁶

53. *E. C.* IV. Kr. 70, p. 110. This sale deed is repeated elsewhere. *E. C.* III. Ml. 83, p. 64.

54. *E. C.* XII. Si. 34, p. 94.

55. *Ibid.*, IV. Yl. 56, p. 32.

56. *Ibid.*, Ng. 106, p. 141. The Sthānācārya of the south may be compared with the Sthānāntarika mentioned as an officer in one of the Oriṣṣan inscriptions. *E. I.* XV. p. 2.

The Office of the Sthānika was common to the Jainas, the Śrīvaiṣṇavites, the Kālāmukhas, and the Śaivites.

One of the most important considerations in regard to the Sthānikas, is that the office of the Sthānika was common among the Jainas, the Śrīvaiṣṇavites, the Kālāmukhas, and the Śaivites. In this detail the Sthānikas and the Goravas bear comparison. For from the examples given above, it must have been evident to the reader that the name Gorava was applied also to the Jainas. But in the history of the Jainas and the Hindus, the office of a Sthānika carried much respect and many privileges along with it. Among the Jainas there were the Sthāniya or Thāniyakula Jainas, as is mentioned in some Mathurā inscriptions of about the 1st century A. D.⁵⁷ The office of the priests of the Dhundiya sect of Jainas, is still called Sthānaka.⁵⁸ We have to surmise that the use of the words Sthāniya and Sthānaka in the above contexts, referred obviously to the office and dignity of a *sthāna*. Our surmise is proved by the Īśvara temple stone inscription found at Balla, Āvaṇi hobli, Mūlbāgal tāluka, Mysore State, and dated about A. D. 970. In this stone inscription of the reign of the Pallava-Nolamba king Dilipayya, we are told that Tribhuvanakartta was ruling the *sthāna* (*Tribhuvanakarttara sthānamam ālutt ire*),⁵⁹ Now we know from another stone inscription also in the same place but dated A. D. 1007 that this Tribhuvankarttara was a Bhaṭāra, *i. e.*, a Bhaṭṭāraka, a title which was generally applied to a Jaina priest. In this record he is styled as one ruling the Āvaṇiya *sthāna*, thereby showing that he was the high priest of the whole Āvaṇinād.⁶⁰ We shall have to refer to this great figure presently in some detail.

More definite evidence than the above concerning the existence of Sthānikas among the Jainas is afforded in other records, one of which was that found in the Taṭṭekere Rāmésvara temple, Shimoga, and dated about A. D. 1085. This inscription contains the interesting information that a certain official named Pērggaḍe Nokkaya, who was the disciple of Prabhācandra Siddhāntadeva of the Mūla *sangha*, Kṛāṇūr *gaṇa*, and Meṣapāṣaṇa *gaccha*, erected four *basadis* (evidently at Taṭṭekere), and made specified grants of land for the Sthānāpatīs of the Gaṇa-*gaccha*.⁶¹

57. *E. I. I.* pp. 378, 383, 386, 392, 393.

58. Burgess-Indraji, *Cave Temples of Western India*, p. 68.

59. *E. C. X.* Mb. 93, p. 99.

60. *Ibid.*, Int. p. xxii, Mb. 91, p. 99.

61. *Ibid.*, VII. Sh. 10, p. 12.

Another stone inscription found at Śābanūr, Dāvanagere tāluka, Mysore State, and dated A. D. 1128 illustrates better our statement. In this record it is related that the *Senior Daṇḍanāyakiti* Kāliyavve granted specified land in the orthodox manner to Śāntīśayana Paṇḍita, the Sthānācārya of Śēmbanūr (*śrīmat-Śēmbanūr-sthānācārya-Śāntīśayana-panḍitara kayyalu śrīmat-piriya-daṇḍanāyakiti Kālikavve etc.*). This grant was made for the company of Pārśvadeva and the service of the god, and the livelihood of the *pūjāri*.⁶² The distinction made here between the Pūjāri and the Sthānācārya is very significant. For it shows that even among the Jainas the Sthānikas were never confounded with the ordinary priests.

The dignity of the office of a Sthānācārya is further borne out by the Barmma temple stone inscription found at Huruḷi, Sohrab tāluka, Mysore State, and dated A. D. 1237. It is narrated in this inscription that Elamballī Deki Śeṭṭi made specified gifts of land for the repairs of the Śāntinātha *basadi* constructed by him as well as for the gifts of food to the Jīyas and the four castes of Śramaṇas. This gift was made to the *Śāntinātha-ghaṭika-sthāna-maṇḍalācārya* Bhānukīrti Siddhāntadeva in the prescribed orthodox manner (after washing the latter's feet). And the same record continues to narrate that Bhānukīrti Siddhāntadeva made over that *sthāna* (office) to his disciple Mantravādi Makaradhvaṇa.⁶³

In about A. D. 1255, as is related in one of the Malleśvara temple stone inscriptions at Hirēhaḷḷi, Belūr tāluka, the Sthānika of the *basadi* of Ādiguṇḍanahaḷḷi along with Māca Gaupḍa, Māra Gaupḍa, Cikka Gaupḍa, Cikka Māceya, and the Sthānika Kalla Jīya of that place (*allīya Sthānika Kalla Jīya*), constructed a *basadi* and gave it to Mādayya, the son of Mācayya. This latter person Mācayya was the disciple of Perumāḷu-kanti. One interesting detail in this connection is that the Jaina *gurus* Vajranandi and Mallisenadeva joined the donors on this occasion.⁶⁴

Ruling a *sthāna* was not the only privilege of the Sthānikas among the Jainas. The Caturmukha *basadi* stone inscription of Karkala, South Kanara, dated Śaka 1508 (A. D. 1586) is of special importance in this connection. This record informs us that bathing, worship, and the other ceremonies of the Tirthankaras Ara, Malli, and Nemīśvara on the four sides and of the twenty-four Tirthankaras, on the western side of the same Caturmukha

62. *E. C.* IX. Dg. 90, p. 67.

63. *Ibid.*, VIII. Sb. 384, p. 68.

64. *Ibid.*, V. B1. 139, p. 92.

basadi, were to be performed by the fourteen families of Sthānikas living in the four directions of the same *basadi*. King Bhairarasa Oḍeyar of Kārkaḷa gave specified grants of land for the above mentioned ceremonies as well as for the *anga-ranga-bhoga* ceremonies, etc., of the images.⁶⁵ The fact that in the famous Tribhuvanatilaka *caityālaya* of Kārkaḷa the daily worship was performed by the fourteen families of the Sthānikas who lived around that *basadi*, proves beyond doubt that as "rulers of the *sthāna*", the Sthānikas were entrusted with the duty of conducting the daily worship in a Jaina temple.

In this connection it may not be out of place to observe that Śravaṇa Belgoḷa, the most famous Jaina centre in the south, also possessed Sthānikas. This is proved by epigraphic as well as literary evidence. One of the many inscriptions at Śravaṇa Belgoḷa is a damaged record dated A.D. 1455. In it we are told that Cārukirti Paṇḍitadeva, the disciple of Abhinava Paṇḍitadeva, the Gavudagaḷ of Belgulanāḍu, many of the jewel merchants, the Paṇḍita-Sthānikas, and physicians, did some useful work which is unfortunately effaced in the record.⁶⁶ The evidence of an inscription dated A. D. 1634 will be cited in a later context. This epigraph also proves that the Sthānikas managed the shrines of Śravaṇa Belgoḷa.

The literary evidence concerns Pañcabāṇa, the author of the Kannaḍa poem *Bhujabālacarite* written in the *sāṅgatya* metre in A. D. 1612. He tells us that he was the son of the Sthānika Cennappa of Śravaṇa Belgoḷa.⁶⁷

That the office of a Sthānika was to be found among the Śrīvaiṣṇavites is proved by the following epigraph discovered in the Narasiṃha temple at Belūr. It is dated A. D. 1174. It registers a royal gift by the Hoysala monarch Ballāḷa Deva of the petty taxes (specified in detail) from twelve villages (named), to the god Vijayanārāyaṇa in that *nāḍu* of Belūr. And for the performance of prayers, sacrifices, daily service, and recitations of the Vedas, the Hoysala king gave further grants of villages (specified) to the 120 Bhaṭṭas of Kēsavapura (*i. e.*, Belūr), the twenty-one (priests) of Śubhapura, and the thirty Śrīvaiṣṇava Sthānikas of that place (*ī-sthāḷada-sthānika-Śrīvaiṣṇavarū mūvattakum*).⁶⁸ The Śrīvaiṣṇavas mentioned here were Brahmans,

65. *E. I.*, VIII. pp. 132-136.

66. *Ibid.*, II. No. 257, p. 116.

67. *Mysore Archaeological Report for 1912*, p. 68.

68. *E. C. V.* Bl. 59, p. 58.

as is proved by another stone inscription found in the same place but dated A. D. 1117.⁶⁹

The existence of a Sthānāpati among the Kālāmukhas referred to elsewhere by us, is further corroborated by the Gaṇapati temple stone inscription found at Kaṇikaṭṭe, Arasikere taluka, Mysore State, and dated A. D. 1152. It informs us that Śivāsakti Paṇḍita was the Sthānāpati of the Jagateśvara temple of Kalikaṭṭe (*Jagateśvarada sthānāpati Śivāsakti Paṇḍitarige*). He received specified gifts of money and land from the *Mahāpradhāna* Ballama, during the reign of the Hoysala king Narasinga Deva.⁷⁰

These epigraphs establish clearly the claims of Sthānikas to Brahmanhood. Nevertheless, there is one detail which requires elucidation here. In the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya no reference is made to the community to which the Sthānikas belonged. For, as we have already seen, to him they were essentially officials. Such was also the position which the Sthānikas enjoyed in historical times. And in this capacity as officials in charge of temples and temple lands, the Sthānikas, as is proved by the following record, carefully distinguished themselves from the ordinary Brahmans. The inscription in question was discovered near the same Gaṇapati temple mentioned just above. It has been assigned to A. D. 1215 by Rice. The distinction between ordinary Brahmans and the officials called Sthānikas is very well illustrated in this inscription which narrates the following—That five Sthānikas of the immemorial *agrahāra* of Vijayanarasimhapura *alias* Kālikattī, by name Biṭṭi-guru, the son of the Sthānācārya Devarāsi guru, Jagat-jīya, Canda Jīya, Sankha Jīya, and Lakha Jīya, the last being the son of Nāga guru, after agreeing among themselves, gave the following sale deed (*vole*) to all the Brahmans of the same *agrahāra* of Vijayanarasimhapura in the presence of the great senior merchant Ponnaccha Śeṭṭi and others (named) as follows—A dispute having arisen as to some gain or loss in the land of the god Kamateśvara, the people of the place, Ponnaccha Śeṭṭi, the Jīyas, the Gāvunḍas, and Cavugāveyas, having assembled, inspected the place, and said to those (five priests) (*ā Sthānikarige hēḷalu*),—"It is not right for you to dispute about his". On which the Sthānikas agreeing said—"We will make no dispute. From this day forth the land of all the temples which we have been enjoying is ours; the land which the Brahmans have been enjoying since the *agrahāra* was established is theirs. When the

69. *Ibid.*, Bl. 58, p. 58.

70. *Ibid.*, Ak. 52, p. 129. For other examples, see *E. I.* VI. pp. 93, 135 and *ibid.*, n

land was distributed to us and the Brahmans there was no watchman for Halli Hiriyūr". Such was the *vōle* given by the Sthānikas to the Brahmans. We may observe here that this deed in writing was duly attested by quite a number of witnesses and written on stone by an approved stone mason (named).⁷¹

But it is not to be inferred from the above record that the Sthānikas were not Brahmans themselves. Epigraphic evidence conclusively proves that the Sthānikas were, indeed, Brahmans. The Mūleśvara temple stone inscription found at Maḍivāḷa, Kolār taluka, Mysore State, and dated A. D. 1394 is very useful in this connection. It registers the sale of land in that year by the following Sthāṇattāril (which is the Tamil equivalent for Sthānikas) of the temple of Śrī Mūlasthāna Uḍaiyar at Tendattumaḍaivilāgam—Mādhava Bhaṭṭa, the son of Mādhava Bhaṭṭa of the Kāśyapa *gotra*, Nācchiappa, Kāmanan, and Ponnipillai, to Śirucchomaṇa, the son of Śāmantha Bhaṭṭa of the Hāriti *gotra*, and a Sthānika of the Śomiśuram Uḍaiyar temple at Śūrūr. The land sold is called *keṣetra*. The four Sthānikas of the Śrī Mūlasthāna Uḍaiyar temple having received full payment, made over to Śirucchomaṇa the full possession of the tract of land in that place which had formed their portion of the *devadāna* of the Śrī Mūlasthāna Uḍaiyar temple, including the houses, the gardens attached there to, the *gōmāl* lands, the wet and dry lands, the wells under ground, the trees over ground and the surrounding hamlets, together with all kinds of rights (specified).⁷²

While the above stone inscription undoubtedly proves that the Sthānikas were Brahmans, and that they possessed *devadāna* lands attached to temples, it also enables us to assert that in one particular respect they had completely violated an important injunction of Kauṭalya. For we saw in the above pages that Kauṭalya specifically laid it down as a rule that Sthānikas who were endowed with lands, shall have no right to alienate them by sale or mortgage⁷³. In the above Mūleśvara temple record a sale deed of a portion of the *devadāna* property belonging to the Sthānikas of the Śrī Mūlasthāna Uḍaiyar temple has been registered. We shall see that there were other instances as well of the sale of endowed land by the Sthānikas.

But to continue with the question of the Brahmanhood of the Sthānikas. The Gongadipura stone inscription (Bangalore taluka) dated A. D. 1495 affirms that the Sthānikas were, indeed,

71 *E. C. V.*, Ak. 49, p. 128.

72 *Ibid.*, X. K1. 81, pp. 22-23.

73. Kauṭalya, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

Brahmans. This epigraph registers the gift of the Gangaḍihalli (village) in Kukkalanāḍu, within the jurisdiction of his *nāyakaship*, by the *Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* Gōḍe Rāya, to the sons of Timmarasa, the Sthānika priest of Vakkejallimangala and to others (named.) The reason why such a gift was made is unknown. But it is clear from the record that Timmarasa was a Brahman. For it narrates that he belonged to the Kaśyapa *gotra* and Āpasthamba *sūtra* (*Kaśyapa gōtrada Āpasthamba sūtrada Vakkejallimangala Sthānāpati Timmarasa*).⁷⁴

Further proof may be adduced to show that the Sthānikas were Brahmans. This is gathered from the Triyambaka temple stone inscription discovered at Triyambaka, Terakaṇāmbi hobli, Guṇḍlupēṭṭi tāluka, Mysore State. Dated in A. D. 1535 this record like the above is one more proof to show that the Sthānikas had transgressed the injunction of Kauṭalya in the matter of selling their *devadāna* lands. But it contains the fact that during the *pūrupatya* of Bhāskrayya, Agent for the Affairs of Rāma Bhaṭṭayya, Ayyappa was the Sthānika of the god Triyambaka. Ayyappa is called the son of Nāñjanātha Joyiśa, of the Vaśiṣṭha *gotra*, Drāhyāyana *sūtra*, and Sāma *sākhā*. Sthānika Ayyappa gave a sale deed of lands (*bhūdana kraya śāsana*) to the treasury of the god Triyambaka. This sale deed was in regard to the share (specified in detail) which had come to him rent free by a *śāsana*, the share (also specified in detail) which had come to him as a gift, and the share which he had purchased from one Gopaṇa. These lands were sold in order to pay off the debts of his uncle Triyambakadeva.⁷⁵

The above record no doubt demonstrates that Sthānika Ayyappa had violated Kauṭalya's injunction mentioned above; but it establishes beyond doubt the priestly class to which the Sthānikas belonged.⁷⁶

4. THE POSITION, PRIVILEGES, AND POWERS OF THE STHĀNIKAS IN HISTORICAL TIMES

In order to understand the duties and rights enjoyed by the Sthānikas in historical times, it is necessary that we should review epigraphs ranging from the ninth century A.D. onwards till the

74. *E. C.*, IX. Bn. 123, p. 24.

75. *Ibid.*, IV. Gu. 4, p. 36.

76. In view of this clear evidence it seems that Mr. H. Vasudeva Rao's contention that the Sthānikas are, and have been, Brahmans, is quite correct. Read *Rāṣṭrabandhu* of July 16th 1928, p. 11 (Mangalore)

eighteenth century A.D. The evidence of these numerous epigraphs, we may repeat, is of first-rate importance, in as much as they not only cover ten long centuries, but also the three important regions of the south and the west—Karnāṭaka, the Tamil land, and the Āndhradeśa.

NINTH CENTURY A.D.

The Madhukeśvara temple damaged stone inscription found at Cikka Madhure, Chāḷlakere tāluka, Mysore State, and dated about A.D. 815, of the reign of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch Prabhūtavarṣa Śrīvallabha (*i.e.*, Govinda III, A.D. 794–A.D. 814), contains an unusual variant of the name Sthānika. It is the word *Sāndeva Sāntiga* used in connection with the temple priest Paramēśvara of Koḷūr Nakhareśvara, the disciple of Vinitātmacārya. The Sthānika evidently received the grant of land (specified) made by Gavaṇabbe, the consort of the prince Pallavamalla, who ruled over Madarikal and other (specified) territories.⁷⁷

A clearer use of the word Sthānika is in A.D. 828 when Sthāniga Madhuravajha is mentioned as the engraver of a copper plate grant of the Ganga king Rācamalla (Satyavākya I). Madharavajha was of the Viśvāmitra *gotra* and a native of the town of Karuvūr.⁷⁸

TENTH CENTURY A.D.

A great name among the Sthānikas in the last quarter of the tenth and the first quarter of the eleventh century A.D. is that of the Sthānika Tribhuvanakarttara Bhaṭāra, who has already been referred to in this treatise. Nine records refer to the powerful influence wielded by this Sthānācārya in the Āvapideśa during the reign of the Nolamba king Dilipayya Iṣṭa Nolamba. In some inscriptions Tribhuvanakarttara, who had also the *biruda* of Paṇḍitadeva, is said to have been merely governing the spiritual kingdom (*tapā rājyam geyve*), when the king Dilipayya was ruling the earth.⁷⁹ In other records Tribhuvanakarttara is represented as ruling the *Āvaṇīya sthāna* (*Āvaṇīyada sthānamam ālutta ire*), or merely ruling the *sthāna*, obviously of the Āvaṇināḍ. These later records are dated about A.D. 970 and A.D. 1007.⁸⁰

77. *E.C.* XI. Cl. 34, p. 101, text, pp. 277–278.

78. *M. A. R.* for 1909, p. 25.

79. *M. A. R.* for 1927, p. 90; *E. C. X.* Mb. 94 & Mb. 264 both dated *circa* A. D. 970, pp. 100, 133; *M.A.R.* for 1923, p. 54.

80. *F. C. X.* Mb. 91 dated A.D. 1007; Mb. 93 dated *circa* A.D. 970, p. 99; *M.A.R.* for 1923, p. 54; *ibid.*, for 1927, pp. 91, 92.

But both these records are posthumous, since the date of the death of Tribhuvanakarttara is given in the Giṇḍitirtha stone inscription dated A.D. 931. This record says that having ruled the Āvaṇīya *sthāna* for fifty years, constructed fifty temples, and built two big tanks, on that date Tribhuvanakarttara, entitled the *Kaliyuga Rudra*, departed this life.⁸¹ Hence this remarkable Sthānācārya exercised his powerful sway from A.D. 891 till A.D. 931.

To about the tenth century A.D. may be assigned the stone inscription found in Sangasandra in the hobli of Duggasandra, Kolar district, and dated only in the cyclic year Krodhi, Caitra Śu. 3. It informs us that Rācayya, the son of Timmayya, of Kuruḍamale, gave the gift of the village of Karapanahalli in Kuruḍamaleśime to the Sthānika Kaṇṇappa, who was the manager of the temple of the god Sangeśvara, as a hereditary grant. This gift was made for the service of offering food and lights to the god.⁸²

ELEVENTH CENTURY A.D.

A more powerful and famous name than that of Tribhuvanakarttara mentioned above is that of the *Rājaguru Bhikṣūśamaya-cakravartī-saptāhattari-sthānācārya* Sarveśvaraśaktideva, the great Kālāmukha priest who was in charge of seventy-seven temples in and around Kuppaṭur. Sarveśvaraśaktideva is also said to be ruling in peace the kingdom of penance (*taporājya*) in the Kaiṭabheśvara temple stone record (Sohrab taluka) dated A.D. 1070. This learned man received many grants at the hands of Udayāditya Daṇḍanāyaka, who had received them from the Western Ālukya monarch Someśvaradeva.⁸³

The priests of the well known Kuppaṭur Kōṭīśvara Mūlasthāna temple and of all the eighteen temples there were called *Kōṭīśvara-mūlasthāna-pramukha-pādineṣṭu-sthānad-ācārya-rum*, in a stone inscription dated A.D. 1077 and found in the Jaina *basadi* in Cikka Cavuṭagrāma in the Sohrab taluka.⁸⁴

TWELFTH CENTURY A.D.

The importance of the Sthānikas in public matters not pertaining to temples but to public grants is seen in a stone inscription found in the Aundh State, Bombay Presidency. This

81. *E.C.X.* Mb. 65, p. 95.

82. *M.A.R.* for 1927, p. 89.

83. *E.C. VIII.* Sb. 276, p. 47.

84. *E. C. VIII.* Sb. 262, p. 42.

record dated A.D. 1107 relates the following—That in the reign of the Western Cālukya king Vikramāditya IV, his officer Prabhu Sonnane Nāyaka, who was placed over Kollāpura (mod. Kolhapur), along with his wife, daughter and son (all named) granted a village (location specified) for the services of the goddess Mahālakṣmī, and at the same time granted other lands (to the priest?) Bairanāyaka. To these charities the Sthānikas were cited as witnesses, and the latter had to guard the gift against obstructors (*sarva-bādhā parihāram āgi sakala-sthānigarum gaṇḍa māḍadavara hadana variyalu* [?] *biṭṭa dharma*).⁸⁵

There are other instances to illustrate the importance of the Sthānikas in the twelfth century A.D. The damaged Rāmeśvara temple inscription found at Hale Sohrab, and dated about A.D. 1129, registers a gift of land to the god Kali. This gift was engraved on a stone by the Sthānika Boppaya Jiya with the approval of the Senabova Biṭṭimayya.⁸⁶ In about A.D. 1139, as the Malleḍavaragūḍi stone inscription found at Bikanahalli, Chikkamagaḷūr taluka, Mysore State, relates, during the reign of the Hoysala monarch Tribhuvanamalla Viṣṇuvardhanadeva, Ereyama Śeṭṭi, the son of the head merchant (*vaḍḍa-vyavahāri*) Dori Śeṭṭi, made over a grant (of land) for his god to the Sthānika Tatvapatha Paṇḍita.⁸⁷ In about A.D. 1153 the Sthānāpatis of Kēḍāram-koṇḍeśvara temple at Talakāḍu *alias* Rājarājapuram, having placed before them the Sthānāpatis of the seven towns and five *maṭhas* made an agreement with certain Gaṇḍas (named) in regard to the *kaṇṭikāra* share which they had sold. This was during the reign of the Hoysala king Narasimha I.⁸⁸ An undated inscription, assignable to the same year A.D. 1153, styles Padmadēvaṇṇa Gaṅgaṇṇa as the Sthānāpati of the seven towns and the five *maṭhas* of Talakāḍu-Rājarājapuram.⁸⁹

To the middle of the twelfth century must be assigned the stone inscription found in the Ramanandīśvaram-Uḍaiyar temple at Tirukaṇṇapuram in the Tanjore district. It falls within the reign of the Coḷa monarch Kulottunga Coḷadeva II (?—A.D. 1143); and it relates the following—That the Māheśvaras and the Tānattar (Sthānikas) of the temple of Uḍaiyar Trāmanandichuram-uḍaiya-Nāyanār set up a Paurayaṇadevar (?) at Tirukaṇṇapuram, and approaching the temple authorities at

85. *M. A. R.* for 1927, pp. 147-148.

86. *E. C.* VIII. Sb. 49, p. 9.

87. *Ibid.* VI. Cm. 144, p. 55.

88. *E. C.* III. Ml. 60, p. 62.

89. *Ibid.* III. Ml. 57, p. 62.

Cidambaram in their assembly hall, represented to them how they (the Māheśvaras and the Sthānikas) were in need of corn and coin. Arrangements were at once made to help the temple in distress. And the Sthānikas and the Māheśvaras who collected the various donations, were each entitled to receive (a remuneration?) from the temples owning more than ten *vēḷi* of *devadāna* land, one *kaḷam* of rice, and from others one *tuṇi* and one *podakku*. The Devakaṇmis (menial temple servants) and the accountants were to co-operate with the Māheśvaras and the Sthānikas in the collection of the amount.⁹⁰

The above record is doubly important: Firstly, it ranks the Māheśvaras with the Sthānikas, entrusting both with the work of collecting money and corn for temples. And, secondly, it clearly distinguishes the Devakaṇmis from the Sthānikas, thereby proving once again that in the history of southern India the Sthānikas were never confounded with the lower temple servants.

That the original meaning of the word *sthāna* (an office) was retained in the twelfth century is proved by the Keśava temple stone inscription found at Belūr, Hassan district, Mysore State. In this record dated A.D. 1174 it is related that Biṭṭibova constructed the shrine of Biṭṭeśvara within the courtyard of the famous Keśava temple at Belūr. For the offerings in this shrine as well as in that of Jagatīśvara, the Hoysala king granted the village of Kōnēṇil situated in Tagarenād. And Biṭṭibova granted the trusteeship (*sthāna*) of the two shrines to a Śaiva priest called Tejonidhi Paṇḍita (*Tejonidhi-panḍitargg-ī sthānamam dhārāpūrvvakam Biṭṭibōvam koṭṭa*).⁹¹

Tejonidhi Paṇḍita's disciple Devendra Paṇḍita, we may incidentally note, is called in a record dated A. D. 1159, and found in the Mādeśvara temple at Sūlekere, Arasikere tāluka, Mysore State, Sthānāpati Devendra Paṇḍita. He received a grant of land made by Bhava Heggade on behalf of the god Mūlasthāna of Sūleyakere in that year.⁹²

Tejonidhi Paṇḍita was himself a Kāḷāmukha teacher. In A. D. 1161 he is mentioned as the disciple of Vāmaśakti Paṇḍita, and his co-student was Kalyāṇaśakti Paṇḍita. To Tejonidhi Paṇḍita was granted specified land by Senāpati Daṇḍanāyaka's wife Mahādevī Daṇḍanāyakiti, along with a house for the Jīya.⁹³ Tejonidhi was

90. *Ep. Ref. of the S. Circle for 1923*, p. 107.

91. *M. A. R. for 1934*, pp. 80, 82.

92. *E. C. V. Ak.* 119, p. 165.

93. *Ibid.* XI. Dg. 84, p. 67.

also the recipient of another grant of land at the hands of the *Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* Vijaya Paṇḍya Deva in A. D. 1177.⁹⁴

Another instance may be given to show that managership of a temple and the office of a *sthāna* were one and the same. This refers to the reign of the Hoysala king Vīra Ballāḷa II, when in about A. D. 1185 in the village of Antarpalli, Candramūliyaṇṇa appointed Mahādeva, the son of Viṇṇayāṇḍar, as the Sthānāpati and manager of the temple in that village.⁹⁵

The famous *guru* Vāmaśaktideva, of the great temple of Kedāra in Baḷligāme, Tālgunda hobli, Shikarpur taluka, Mysore State, is called in a record dated A. D. 1193 the Sthānācārya of that temple.⁹⁶

THIRTEENTH CENTURY A.D.

In the thirteenth century the Sthānikas continued to be powerful as well as popular. The *Mahāprabhu* Nāgarasa set up the god Nāgeśvara in the Honnāli taluka in A. D. 1203. And for the god Nāgeśvara he granted specified land to the learned Sthānācārya Sovācārya Bhairavayati. This was in the reign of the Hoysala king Vīra Ballāḷa II, as is related in a stone inscription found in the same temple at Arakere.⁹⁷

The importance of the Sthānikas is proved by the Basavana-guḍi stone inscription at Huruḷi, Sohrab taluka, and dated A. D. 1216. This falls within the reign of the Yādava king Singhaṇa Deva, when Droṇapāla, a native of Prabhāskṣetra (*i. e.*, evidently the well known Prabhas Paṭṭan) in Saurāṣṭra, and an official under that Yādava monarch, presented the village of Eḷeballi and Sirivūr for the permanent worship of the god Somanātha in Bandanike in Nāgarakhaṇḍa Eighteen Kampana. This grant was made with the knowledge of the following Sthānāpatīs—Bhairama Jiya, the Sthānāpati of the Somanātha temple at Bandanike; Nākeya Jiya, the Sthānāpati of the god Nakhareśvara; Sarveśvara Deva, the Sthānāpati of the god Kōṭṭīśvara at Kuppaṭūr; and Rudradhvaja, the Sthānāpati of the god Rāmeśvara of the Yammanūr village. Along with these were all the other Bhaṭṭarakas (unnamed) and the Brahmans residents who were the following—the Sarvajña Brahmans, Śuśvari Brahmans, and Bhāla-Sarasvatī Brahmans. There were other individual Brahmans who were present. These

94. *Ibid.*, XI. Dg. 86, p. 68. These three inscriptions Ak. 119, Dg. 84, and Dg. 86 are referred to by Dr. Krishna, *M. A. R. for 1934*, p. 83.

95. *E. O.* III. Ml. 54, p. 61.

96. *Ibid.*, VII. Sk. 105, p. 77.

97. *Ibid.*, Hn. 108, p. 177.

were Kāmana Bhaṭṭa, Cakriya Deva of Cikka Keṇevūru *agrahāra*, Basavarasa of Tilivaḷḷi *agrahāra*, Bhīmaya of Kuppaṭūr *agrahāra*, and other Brahmans (named). Various district officials and citizen—representatives are also mentioned in the epigraph, as those whose consent was sought by Droṇapāla Deva before making the grant. It is interesting to note that among the other witnesses mentioned in the epigraph were the following—Ketaya Jīya, the Tammaḍi of the Lakṣmaṇeśvara temple, Malleyadeva, the Tammaḍi of the Kalideva temple, and the Jaina guru Hemakīrti of the Śāntinātha *basadi* of Bandanike.⁹⁸

We have cited above the evidence of an inscription to prove that the Sthānācāryas were sometimes endowed with authority over seventy-seven temples. This is further corroborated by another stone inscription found also in the Kaiṭabheśvara temple in the Sohrab tāluka, and dated A.D. 1231. In this inscription Rudraśakti Paṇḍitadeva, the learned Kāḷāmukha priest of the Kōṭṭīśvara temple at Kuppaṭūr, is called the Cakravarti of the Ekkōṭi-samaya and master of the seventy-seven temples (*saptahattāri sthānācārya*).⁹⁹

The high status occupied by the Sthānikas in Hindu society is also responsible for their having been included on committees of enquiry set up by the State, or for their being cited as witnesses to public grants. One of the Śivapurīśvara temple stone inscriptions found at Śivayam (Kulittalai tāluka, Trichinopoly district), and dated only in the fourth regnal year of the king Rajendra Coḷa Deva III (*i. e.*, in A. D. 1250) [1246-1267], contains the following interesting details:— That the monarch appointed a committee to enquire into the affairs of the temples of Tīrumāṇik-kamalai-Uḍaiya-Nāyanār in Kurukkaināḍu, a subdivision of Rajagambhīraṇāḍu. The committee of enquiry included the *Mahāpradhāna Maṇḍalika Murāri* Aḷiya Somaya Daṇḍanāyaka, Śevayya Daṇḍanāyaka, Somanātha Viṭṭayya, the Māheśvaras, the Sthānikas, and the merchants.¹⁰⁰

As regards the Sthānikas being cited as witnesses to public grants, the evidence of three inscriptions all dated in the same year

98. *E. C.* VIII. Sb. 391, pp. 70-71.

99. *E. C.* VIII. Sb. 275, p. 46.

100. *49 of 1913*; Rangacharya, *Top List* III, p. 1525. An inscription in the Śānkaranāyinarkōyil in the tāluka of the same name (Tinnevely district) affirms that a gift of land was made to the Sthānikas of the temple by the ruler Vikramapāṇḍya in his sixth regnal year. Rangacharya, *ibid.* III. p. 1476.) The date of this record cannot be determined.

A. D. 1288 may be cited. These records were found near the Rāmeśvara temple at Mosāḷe, Arasikere taluka, Mysore State. In the first we are told that the *Rājaguru* Rudrāsaktideva's sons (disciples) Saiganna and Candrabhuṣaṇadeva, and Ballanna's son Candaguru, granted specified land for the offerings of the god Gaureśvara which the Vaidya Devapilleyaṇṇa had set up in the Malleyanahalli. This grant was engraved on stone in the temple enclosure, in the presence of the 120 Sthānikas of Mosāḷe. In the second record dated in the same year (A. D. 1288), the great minister Bireya Dappāyaka made a grant of specified lands, which he had acquired in Malleyanahalli, for the offerings of the god Gaureśvara, in the presence of the 120 Sthānikas of Mosāḷe, making them over to the Vaidya Devapilleyaṇṇa. In the third inscription the same donor, on account of the work of the temple of Gaureśvara which was erected in Malleyanahalli by Vaidya Devapilleyaṇṇa, in the name of the *Mahāpradhāna's* mother, bought lands and made them over to Devapilleyaṇṇa, along with the temple, in the presence of the *Rājaguru* Rudrāsaktideva and the 120 Sthānikas of Mosāḷe.¹⁰¹

The great influence wielded by the Sthānikas in Karnāṭaka is seen in the Rāmeśvara temple stone inscription found at Rāmanāthapura, Basavapaṭṭana hobli, Arkalgūḍ taluka, Mysore State. This inscription is dated A.D. 1252, and it belongs to the reign of the Hoysala monarch Someśvara Deva, when his viceroys Somadevarasa and Boppadevarasa were in their royal residence Śrīranga-paṭṭana. In that year the Sthānāpatis of the god Rāmanātha, by name Kailasa Śiva Jiya, Māda Jiya, Kāḷa Jiya, Appa Jiya, Arasa Jiya, and Gōvaṇṇa, taking with them the consecrated food of the god Rāmanātha went into the presence of the viceroys Somadevarasa and Boppadevarasa, and blessing the latter with long life, prosperity, and victory, petitioned thus—"For the affairs of the god Rāmanātha, for the offerings...perpetual lamp, water vessels, cloths, and drummers, we have given 72 she-buffaloes and he-buffaloes, whose milk produces 200 *gadyāṇa*. For service, from the interest on the 200 *gadyāṇa*, we have been providing..." The damaged portion of the record contained probably a clause to the effect that the endowment from which the Sthānikas carried on the worship and offerings to the god in the temple, was insufficient, and that, therefore, they begged the rulers not only to renew the original grant but also to make fresh endowments. This supposition of ours is proved by the statement in the epigraph that the rulers Somadeva and Boppadeva coming to the town of

101. *E. C. V. Ak.* 11-13, p. 116. See also *Ak.* 10, p. 115.

the petitioners (evidently to see personally the state of affairs there), caused the original award to be renewed by Baicaya and Kaṇṇaya, and added the village of Māvanūr on the bank of the Kaverī to the earlier grant. We are told in the same epigraph that as soon as orders were given for setting up the grant in Māvanūr, the Hoysala monarch Someśvara Deva along with his royal children (*rāyasa kūṣugaḷ*) and his viceroys Somadeva and Boppadeva, personally visited Māvanūr, and setting up a Nandi pillar in that village, caused the stone *śasana* to be set up in the temple of the god Rāmanātha.¹⁰²

The importance of the above epigraph lies in the fact that the Sthānikas in the thirteenth century A.D., could appeal directly to the State in matters concerning the welfare of the temples in their charge, and that the rulers at once took prompt action to satisfy their needs. We shall see that this direct contact between the Sthānikas and the State continued to be a special feature in the religious history of Karnāṭaka.

How the Sthānikas co-operated with the other prominent citizens in the matter of awarding distinction upon worthy persons is shown in the Kuṇṇjeśvara temple stone inscription dated A. D. 1255 and discovered at Hiriyūr, Arasikere taluka. The object of this inscription is to commemorate the building of the Kuṇṇjeśvara temple in that year by a rich Jangama merchant named Kaṇḍanambi Setṭi, in the name of his son Kuṇṇa who had just died. Kaṇḍanambi Setṭi, who was greatly honoured in the Hoysala kingdom, richly endowed the temple with many lands (specified); and to his grants was added that made by the Brahmans of the Dāmodara *agrahāra* alias Nāgarahalli.

Kaṇḍanambi had a daughter who was called Candavve. He made her the proprietress (*oḍeyalu*) of the Kuṇṇjeśvara temple, for carrying out the ceremonies. And for her maintenance he granted specified *umbali* lands. This gift of rent-free land was made in the presence of the *Rājaguru* of Dorasamudra, Rudraśakti Deva, and of the Kampanācārya of the Sthānikas of the 120 temples of Arasiyakere and quite a number of *mahāgaṇas* subjects, farmers and the Sthānikas of the two towns called Muttana Hosavūru.

Candavve proved worthy of the office bestowed upon her by her father. And it is interesting to observe that the *Rājaguru* Rudraśakti Deva together with the Kampanācārya of the Sthānikas of the 120 temples and of the Sthānikas of the two Muttana Hosavūru and the other respectable citizens, along with the

102. E. C. V. Ak. 53, pp. 253-254.

mahā-gaṇas and others, bestowed upon her the rank and dignity of a *Gaṇa-kumārī* (Princess of the Gaṇas or followers of Śiva), granting her at the same time the *matta* dues and all other dues payable to the Kuñjeśvara temple, free of all imposts, in perpetuity.¹⁰³

Let us proceed with the history of the Sthānikas in the thirteenth century A.D. The Malleśvaraguḍi stone inscription found at Belatūr, Heggadevanakōṭe taluka, Mysore State, and assigned by Rice to A.D. 1256, relates a curious instance of the impartiality with which the Sthānikas conducted public charities entrusted to their charge. These events fall within the reign of the Hoysala monarch Someśvara Deva, when his officials Cikka Māci Deva, Gopaṇa, and Raṅgaṇa were governing "a settled kingdom". The Sthānāpati of Belatūr in Nūḡunāḍu was Mārāḍa Malloḍeya, the son of the Ekoṭi-paṇḍita Cekoḍeya. The inscription relates that the joint-managers of the fund belonging to the temple which Ekoṭi-paṇḍita Cekoḍeya had erected, caused hindrance to Mārāḍa Malloḍeya. At this Mārāḍa Malloḍeya deposited twenty *gadyāṇa* in the temple from his own hand, and obtaining the approval of the three (named), in order that there might be no hindrance or dispute from any one, divided it equally between the gods Mallikārjuna and Baneśvara in Kētanahalli.¹⁰⁴

Four years later we have an instance of the high position which the Sthānikas held in Hindu society. The following details are gathered from the Somanātha temple stone inscription found at Somapura, Tarikere taluka, Mysore State. It is dated A. D. 1260, and it informs us that during the reign of the Hoysala king Narasimha, the Brahmans of Halasūr bought certain lands through the *Mahāpradhāna* Perumaḷe Daṇḍanāyaka for the services of the god Somanātha at Halasūr. They then granted it free of all taxes, making it over to the Sthānika Sankamayya.¹⁰⁵

In the Pāṇḍya country, too, the Sthānikas exercised their sway. The Kaṭṭemanuganahalli stone inscription found in the Heggadevanakōṭe taluka and dated A. D. 1264, affirms that Nāga Deva, the son of Hariṇi Jīya, was the Sthānika of Ma...ja...la in the Pāṇḍya country. In order to provide for the ceremonies and perpetual lamp of the god Rāmanātha of Maṇigehalli in Nevalenāḍ, he had a stone oil-mill made, during the government of Malleya Daṇḍanāyaka.¹⁰⁶

103. *E. C. V. Ak.* 108, pp. 158-159.

104. *E. C. IV. Hg.* 10, p. 66.

105. *Ibid.*, VI. Tk. p. 103.

106. *Ibid.*, IV. Hg. 102, p. 79.

Conducting daily ceremonies including the burning of the perpetual lamps in temples was an ordinary function of the Sthānikas. Their importance is seen in records which inform us that temples were made over to them by members of the nobility. For instance, in the Īśvara temple stone inscription found at Bōrāpura, Kṛṣṇaṇarājapēṭe taluka, Mysore State, and dated A.D. 1267, it is said that the *Mahāpradhāna* of the Hoysala king Narasinga was Soma Daṇṇāyaka. This great minister's elder sister was Rēvakka Daṇḍanāyakitī. She made over to the Sthānika of Mācanakaṭṭa *alias* Bijjalesvara, by name Meṇḍayyada Mārāyya Nāyaka of the treasury of Tammaliyācārya (*Mācanakaṭṭada Sthānika Tammaliyā-ācāryabhaṇḍārada Meṇḍayyada Mārāyya*), and to his wife and daughter and granddaughter, "a grant of affection", namely, the Śiva temple of Bhairaveśvara which Rēvakka Daṇḍanāyakitī had caused to be erected to the north east of Bommeyanāyakanaḥalli *alias* *agrahūra* Hosavāḍa Bhairavapura. Of course this lady Rēvakka had richly endowed it with gifts of rent free lands.¹⁰⁷

The above is not the only instance of the Sthānikas receiving gifts of land from members of the nobility. From the following stone inscription found at Hirēkōgilūru, Channagiri taluka, Mysore State, and dated A.D. 1268, we learn in what reverence the Sthānikas were held by the nobility. The events narrated in the record belong to the reign of the Yādava king Mādhava Rāya. His great ministers were two brothers, Caṭṭarasa and Kūcarasa, the sons of Nimbi Rāja. These two were placed over the city of Bētūr in the Aravattārubaḍa (sixty-six villages) in the Nōḷambavāḍi 32,000 Province. Caṭṭarasa's crowned eldest son was Caṇḍarasa. This prince granted specified land measured by the Tigulā (*i.e.*, Tamil) pole, for the incense, lights, offerings, and all temple affairs of the god Billeśvara of the immemorial *agrahūra* Dakṣiṇādityavoḷalu *alias* Kōgilūr, at the time of the eclipse of the sun (on the date specified). The grant was made after washing the feet of the Sthānika Daṇḍapaṇiguru, in the presence of the representatives of the village and the worthies of the place.¹⁰⁸

One more instance may be given to show the respect in which the Sthānikas were held in Karnāṭaka. In A.D. 1285 during the reign of the Hoysala king Narasiṃha Deva, Hiriyahaḷḷi Lalāmadeva and his younger brother Haḍivāra Sevaṇṇa constructed a Śivalinga in Goṭṭaganakere. This was done in the name of their mother Maṇcavve. And Lalāmadeva and his brother granted lands (effaced in the record) for the daily worship, decorations, etc., of

107. E. C. IV. Kr. 12, p. 102.

108. *Ibid.*, VII. Ci. 21, pp. 181-182.

the god Mañceśvara, and for the temple repairs, gifts of food to the heads of the *maṭhas* and ascetics, to the Sthānika of that Mañceśvara temple after washing the latter's feet.¹⁰⁹

We have cited above many instances of the Sthānikas violating the injunction laid down by Kauṭalya concerning endowed lands. A stone inscription in the Belūr temple assigned to A.D. 1273 adds to the testimony already given about this point. For it relates that a bond was executed by the Sthānikas of the Bobbeśvara temple and the temple situated to the north-west of the fort of Dorasamudra, in favour of the Ārādhya Rāmakṛṣṇa Prabhu's son Dēvaṇṇa Prabhu.¹¹⁰

One reason why the Sthānikas in comparatively recent times thus infringed the ancient precept regarding endowed lands was perhaps because they were sole masters of temples and of the lands around them. That they were, indeed, managers of temples is further proved by a damaged stone inscription found in the Siddheśvara temple at Nirugunda, Hoḷalakere tāluka. This record has been assigned to about A.D. 1268. It informs us that on the death of the Sthānika priest of the god Siddhanātha of Nirugunda, Nalla Jīya's son Siddha Jīya, the temple became vacant. Since the names of Siddha Jīya and of other priests (Sthānikas) had been "inscribed on the back of the stone-*śāsana* of the god Siddhanātha", the question arose whether the *vr̥tti* of the temple belonged to Siddha Jīya's son Viśvanātha or to the State. It is not clear from the record as to who had sold the *vr̥tti* for thirty-two *gadyāṇa* which was the price of the day. But this sale seems to have been effected, and evidently a petition on behalf of Viśvanātha had been made to the crowned queen's son Coḷayya and to the Brahmans, by the king's servants Mādayya and Ballayya. Unfortunately the record is effaced here, and we are in the dark as to what transpired as a result of the petition.¹¹¹ But one thing seems clear from the above record—that the Sthānikas were, indeed, masters of temples in the thirteenth century A. D.

This is also evident from an inscription on a beam in the Ranganātha temple at Halebīḍ, dated A. D. 1245, which relates the following—That on the death of (the Sthānika) Soma Jīya of the Boceśvara temple (at Dorasamudra), the *Rājaguru* Candrabhūṣaṇa Deva and the 120 Sthānikas of the capital Dorasamudra divided his lands among his wife, son-in-law, and one another.¹¹² Now we

109. *E. C.* XII. Tp. 12, pp. 44–45.

110. *M. A. R.* for 1911, p. 49.

111. *E. C.* XI. Hk. 122, p. 134.

112. *M. A. R.* for 1911, p. 48.

know from both the legal as well as lithic records that the right of dividing the property of a deceased person rested solely with the State, or when such right was delegated by the State, with corporate bodies or officials. Since we cannot conceive of the Sthānikas of Dorasamudra led by the *Rājaguru* of that capital of the Hoysalas, dividing the property of a deceased Sthānika among the latter's relatives without the sanction of the State, and, we may presume, that of the Society as well, we have to assume that they must have received the permission of the Government before dividing the said property. Our supposition in regard to the sanction of the society is proved by the concluding lines of the same epigraph which run thus—That he who violated the arrangement was looked upon as having disregarded the *Rājaguru* and the *samaya*. The latter term obviously refers to the society.

And as regards the sanction of the State being obtained for partitioning or selling lands by the Sthānikas, the following Hōliyanakere (Bangalore taluka) inscription dated A.D. 1294 will be of particular interest. It tells us that in the 40th regnal year of the Hoysala king Rāmanātha Deva, Rājārāja Karkāṭa Mahārāja Tāmattāmaṅgar granted as a charitable gift two villages named Anumaśamuttiram and Uṅgimāraṅ-kūṭṭai (location specified) together with other lands, for feeding Brahmans, to the twenty-eight men (named) of that village of Hōliyanakere, "who should conduct the duties of the Tāṇāpatis (Sthānikas)." It is clearly stated in the record that "I, Tāmattāmaṅgar, made the above grant with the pouring of water, as a charitable gift, to the twenty-eight men, with the right to sell or give away (the lands) for the benefit of the king's sacred body and of myself."¹¹³

Such latitude may explain the sale of lands made, for instance, in A. D. 1296 by the Sthānika Gurappa, the son of Bāca Jīya, to Gurucittadeva Oḍeyar's son Gangideva. This Sthānika seems to have made over even the god Rāmāyadeva to Gangideva Oḍeyar, as the Rāmeśvara temple inscription found near Vīrapura, Māgaḍi taluka, Mysore State, seems to imply.¹¹⁴

Epigraphs of the last quarter of the thirteenth century A. D. only reiterate the statement we have already made concerning the position and duties of the Sthānikas. During the reign of the Hoysala king Narasimha Deva III in A. D. 1279, when Tāreyaṇa Daṇṇāyaka was the governor of Dāsanūr and its neighbourhood, various Gauḍas (named) of Dāsanūr agreeing among themselves, made a specified grant of land to provide for the perpetual lamp and

113. *E. C. IX. Bn. 100*, p. 20.

114. *M. A. R. for 1914-1915*, p. 56.

an upper storey for the temple of the god Viśvanātha. This charity was entrusted to the charge of Sthānika Jīyāṇḍi Harpāṇḍi.¹¹⁵ Similar grants of land were made to the Sthānāpatis Māyi Jīya, the son of Sūri Jīya, and Malla Jīya, in A. D. 1299, by the Malayāḷa chief Vāsudeva Nāyaka's son and a number of others (named), for the god Svayambhū Ankanātha of Niṭṭūr.¹¹⁶

FOURTEENTH CENTURY A.D.

The fourteenth century did not see any diminution either in the status or powers of the Sthānikas. On the other hand, in this century they became uncommonly prominent because of the direct appeals and orders made to them by the State. They continued, of course, to rule over the *sthānas* and *maṭhas* of the land, to receive lands on behalf of the gods in temples, to contract deeds of agreement and partition, and to confer honours, along with others, upon worthy persons who had done signal service to the country.

A few examples will suffice to prove that they were still masters of the temples and the *maṭhas*. An inscription dated A. D. 1334 and found on the roadside at Malavalli grāma, Malavalli taluka, Mysore State, tells us that the *Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* Someya Daṇṇāyaka's son Ballappa Daṇṇāyaka, along with Sōmayanna Oḍeyanna, the Sthānāpati of the seven towns and five *maṭhas* of Talakāḍu, and Saragūr Śeṭṭi's son Mādi Gauḍa, made a grant of land at Hāhanavāḍi.¹¹⁷ Mallappa, the son of Nāga Paṇḍita, is called the Sthānāpati of the seven towns and five *maṭhas* of Talakāḍu in A. D. 1338, during the reign of king Vira Ballāla III.¹¹⁸ A stone inscription found at Kāntāvara, Karkala taluka, South Kanara district, and dated Śaka 1271 (A. D. 1349) affirms that the Sthānikas ruled the Kāntāvara temple. These Sthānikas numbered three hundred and possessed a *grāma* (village) of their own. (*Kāntārada dēvālayada Sthānikakaramun [n] ūrvarum*). Together with the Horayinavaru (*i.e.*, representatives from outside their *grāma*), Bārya Sēnakava, and others (named), they caused a *śilā śāsana* to be written (with details enumerated). This was in the reign of the Vijayanagara king Śrīmatu Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Hariyappa Oḍeyar, when his minister (*pradhāna*) Haḍapada Gautarasa was placed as viceroy over the Mungaḷūru-rājya.¹¹⁹

115. *E. C.* III. Nj. 180, p. 113. In about A. D. 1280 Tiruvālar is called the Sthānāpati of the temple of Vidyēśvara. *Ibid*, TN. 12, p. 70.

116. *Ibid*, IX. Kn. 76, p. 130.

117. *Ibid*, III. Ml. 99, 104, p. 66.

118. *Ibid*, Ml. 109, p. 67.

119. 57 of 1901; *South Indian Inscriptions*, VII. p. 231.

Instances may now be given of the grants of land received by the Sthānikas on behalf of temples in order to conduct worship, festivals, etc., in them. The Sampigesiddheśvara temple stone inscription discovered on the top of the Citradurga (Chitaldroog) (hill) and dated A.D. 1328, relates that Ballappa Daṇḍanāyaka and Singeya Daṇḍāyaka set up a *linga* in Bemmatrakallu in the name of their father Beba Daṇḍāyaka, and received from their royal master king Ballāḷa Deva III the village of Beṇṇedone which they granted in perpetuity as a free gift to the temple. The management of this charity was entrusted to the care of Hiriyaṇṇa Daṇḍāyaka. But to Gōbūr Narahari Deva, the Sthalācārya of that god Bebanātha, they gave four parts of the land, while to the Purāṇika (unnamed) only one part.¹²⁰

The Sthānikas received land on behalf of temples from princes as well. Thus in A.D. 1336, as is related in one of the Varadarājasvāmi temple stone inscriptions found at Tekāl, Śittanādar *alias* Śolappa Perumāḷ, the son of the Coḷa ruler Rājendra Coḷa Cakravarti, Gangaikoṇḍa, Śolapperumāḷ, granted the village of Pulikkurucci (location specified), as a *sarvamānya* gift to provide for the offerings of rice, sandal, lamps, and temple repairs, for the god Aruḷala-nādar at Tekāl. A deed of gift to the above effect was given to the temple authorities (Tānattarkum) and to Śokkapperumāḷ Tādar, permitting them to have the same engraved on stone and copper.¹²¹

Three years later (A.D. 1339) Konaiya Pemme Nāyakan, one of the officers under the *Mahāpradhāna* Dāti Singeya Daṇḍāyaka, granted the village of Puttūr (location given) to provide for the offerings mentioned in the above record, for the same god. This gift was also given to the same donees with the same permission.¹²²

The Cikkapura stone inscription (Hiregaṇṭanūru hobli, Chitaldroog tāluka) dated A.D. 1355 illustrates our point better. This epigraph registers the gift of the village of Cikkapura itself to the Sthānika Somaṇṇa, the son of the Sthānika priest Hiriya Siddhaṇṇa, by Mallinātha Oḍeyar, the son of the *Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* Someya Nāyaka. The grant was made on behalf of the god Siddhanātha of Bemmatanakallu (*i.e.*, Chitaldroog itself).¹²³

Another record found in the Īśvara temple at Kōḍūru, Nagar tāluka, also in the Mysore State, corroborates the statement we have made that public charities pertaining to temples were left in the

120. *E. C.* XI. Cd. 4, p. 3.

121. *Ibid.*, X. Mr. 7, p. 157.

122. *Ibid.*, Mr. 8, pp. 157-158.

123. *E. C.* XI, Cd. 55, p. 14.

charge of the Sthānikas who managed such temples. This inscription is dated A.D. 1367, and it falls within the reign of the Vijayanagara king Bukka Rāya's son Virūpākṣa Rāya, when the latter's minister Talakād Māvarasa was placed over the province of the Āraga Eighteen Kampaṇa. In order that "Virūpa Rāya might have a firm kingdom", the representatives of the Fifty nāḍs made a specified grant of land for the decorations and offerings of the god Śankara in the Bandigaṇali village. And the inscription relates that "The god's Sthānika (name effaced in the record) and the Senabova (name effaced), to their children's children, will maintain this (charity) without fail."¹²⁴

As in the previous centuries, the Sthānikas in the fourteenth century continued to grant lands to worthy citizens along with the other respectable persons of the locality. In this matter the Sthānāpatīs of Talakād became very conspicuous. Thus, for instance, in A.D. 1312 when king Ballāḷa Deva III was ruling, Veṇṇakūma, the son of Gangādhara-deva, and the Sthānāpati of the seven towns and the five *maṭhas* of Talakād *alias* Rājaraṣapuram, granted certain specified lands to Mallappa Nāyaga.¹²⁵ In A.D. 1313, according to the Husagūr stone inscription found at Malavalli, the Sthānāpatīs of the seven *puras* (towns) and the five *maṭhas* of the same city of Talakād, and Ādidevarasa of Ānebasadi and others made a grant of land to certain Gauḍas (named) for having conducted the repairs of Ānebasadi.¹²⁶ Another Tamil inscription of the same date and found in the same place, records that Ariyapiḷḷai *alias* Senāpati, the Sthānāpati of Ānaivaśadi (*i.e.*, Ānebasadi) at Talakād, and Śivana Gāmuṇḍan of Puśukūr in the southern division of Kilaināḍu, granted specified lands to Kōmaḷi, the accountant of Puśukūr, to be enjoyed by him in perpetuity.¹²⁷ Mārālī Pemmanṇa, the Sthānāpati of the seven towns and five *maṭhas* of Talakāḍu, granted, land (to some one) in A. D. 1321 during the reign of the same Hoysala king Ballāḷa Deva III.¹²⁸ From a stone inscription found at Tigadaḷaḷli,

124. *Ibid*, VIII. Nr. 34, p. 133. There is a record assigned to A.D. 1371 and found in the Someśvara temple at Gangāvāra, Devanahalli taluka, Mysore State, which seems to register some regulations pertaining to the different castes and even to the ruler of the Nallūr nāḍ himself ! These regulations were caused to be written by the three Sthānikas (not named) of the same Someśvara temple. But the sense of the inscription is by no means clear. *Ibid*, IX. Dv. 73, p. 83.

125. *Ibid*, III. Ml. 122. p. 68.

126. *M. A. R.* for 1920, pp. 34-35.

127. *M. A. R.* for 1920, p. 35.

128. *E. C.* III. Ml. 107, p. 67.

Malavalli taluka, dated A. D. 1337, we learn that Mallappa, the son of Nāga Paṇḍita, the Sthānapati of the five *maṭhas* of Talakāḍu, granted a village as a *pura* to Mārabhakta and others (named), the share of each being specified. The conditions of the grant, we may note by the way, were that the grantees should pay a small sum of money till A. D. 1339, a slightly increased sum till A. D. 1342, and thenceforward a consolidated sum.

The interest of the above record from Tigaḍahalli lies not only in the granting of a village by a Sthānika to a worthy individual, but also in the fact that he himself was a Jaina by persuasion! We prove that Mallappa was a Jaina by the stipulation in the epigraph that the grantees were to make an annual payment of one *gadyūṇa* for the god Candranāthasvāmi. This god was evidently a Jaina deity. The second reason which makes us assert that Mallappa was a Jaina is his signature at the end of the epigraph, thus—Śrī Vitarāga".¹²⁹

In A. D. 1320 Mādhava, the son of ...va-Raya, obtained sixty *honnu*, which were the dues levied from the road to the town of Kūḍali, from the minister Bēmbeya Daṇṇayaka. With this money Mādhava bought land which in that year, along with the sixty farmers (of the locality), the 120 Sthānikas and others (*nūriṭṭattu Sthānamam muntāgi*), he presented for the decoration of the god Rāma of Kūḍali. This is related in the stone inscription found in the Rameśvara temple at Kūḍali, Shimoga taluka.¹³⁰

The Sthānikas of Tēkaḷ, Veppūr, and Śrīpati (Sihati) also granted lands in the manner indicated above to deserving recipients. One of the Varadarājasvāmi temple stone inscriptions of Tēkaḷ dated A. D. 1355, informs us that the Sthānapatis of the Aruḷalanādan temple at Tēkaḷ along with Śokkaperumāḷ Dāsar granted (in that year) in the orthodox manner certain specified lands and a daily allowance of specified rice to Kōmangaḷam-uḍaiyār Suriyadevar *alias* Tiruvaymoḷi-dāsar, the husband of Varadakkan, in perpetuity. Rice conjectures that the grantee was probably the reciter of the *Drāviḍaprabhandam* in the temple.¹³¹ The same Sthānapātār and Śokkaperumāḷ Dāsar again in A. D. 1356 gave specified daily allowance of cooked rice to a grantee whose incomplete name in the epigraph...rāja-mānnikkan *alias* Varadi, suggests that she may have been Varadakkan mentioned just above.¹³²

129. *M. A. R. for 1920*, p. 35.

130. *E. C. VII. Sh.* 69, p. 27.

131. *Ibid.*, X. Mr. 17, p. 160.

132. *E. C. X. Mr.* 21, p. 161.

The Sthānattār of Veppūr likewise did not hesitate to co-operate with other citizens in this direction. Veppūr lay in the Rājendra-coḷavaḷanāḍu which formed a part of the Nigarili-coḷa-maṇḍalam. Its well known temple was that of Śembiśvaram Uḍaiyar of Tāmarai-karai. Here in this temple assembled the Śrī Rudra-śrī-Māheśvara of Citramēḷi Peruttāḷan Diruttavaṇam, the temple manager (*danma-karttar, i. e., dharma-karttar*) Śembāṇḍai-deva's son Tambāṇa (and another whose name is effaced in the record), and other Brahmans (named) in A. D. 1365, and gave a grant (not specified) to Somāṇa Devar of the Kauśika-gotra. And the Sthānāpati Tambāṇa Jīya, evidently one of the sons of *dharma-karttar* Śembāṇḍai-devar mentioned above, having received full payment in gold, gave with pouring of water, full possession of one-third of the lands (specified in detail) which he had purchased from one Mudali, to Somāṇa Devar. The assembly which had met "on the seat of justice" in the Śembiśvaram-Uḍaiyar temple, obviously ratified the gift made by the Sthānika Tambāṇa Jīya.¹³³

The Śrī-Rudra-śrī-Māheśvara of Citramēḷi Perukkāḷan Dirukāṇ (the Diruttavaṇam of the previous record) himself was the recipient of a specified quantity of paddy and certain specified taxes in the next year A. D. 1366. He was given the above gifts by the assembly of the *mahājanas*, the heads of the *maṭhas* and the *sthānas* (*maḍa-patigaḷ-tāṇa-patigaḷum*), the reciter of the Vedas, the temple manager (*dharma-karttar*) Śembāṇḍi, the Pūjāris Vaitti-bhaṭṭar, Mādeva-bhaṭṭar and their sons, Māra-bhaṭṭar and his sons, the Kaikkōḷars (weavers) of the temple of Kavarippīṇā, the Mūlaccēdi-śrī-Vīra-bhaṭṭira and the servants performing various duties, "from the *pūjari* at the top the scavenger at the bottom".¹³⁴

The spirit of co-operation with which the Sthānikas in their capacity as managers of temples worked along with others, is illustrated in the Bhaira temple stone inscription from Śitibetta, Kolār taluka, and dated A. D. 1393. Periya Perumāḷ Śeṭṭi, the son of Poyyangīḷar Pammi Śeṭṭi, a leading Vaiśya merchant, built a big tank in Śrīpati which was the *tiruvīḍaiyāṭṭam* of the god of Śrīpati. Periya Perumāḷ Śeṭṭi also endowed the temple with a gift of two *khaṇḍugas* of dry land near the southern outlet of the big tank. His services had to be duly appreciated. The damaged stone record states that this was done by a huge assembly of representatives of the *nāḍu* (*palaru uḷḷitta nāṭṭavarum*), including the minister Nāgaṇṇa Oḍeyar of Kaivāranāḍu in Nigarili-ṣoḷa-

133. *Ibid*, IX. Bn. 67, p. 14.

134. *Ibid*, Bn. 66, p. 14.

vaḷanāḍu, Rājarasar, the son of Brahmarasar, and the manager of the temple of Śrīpati (*Śrīpatiyar sthānattār*). This huge assembly approved of the charity of Periya Perumāḷ by affirming that no tax was to be levied on the new land cultivated, that it was to be treated as a *sarvamānya* land for a period of eight years (from that date), and that thenceforward the wet land below the tank should be *kuḍangai* land.¹³⁵

From the inscriptions we learn how disputes between the Sthānikas themselves concerning division of lands were settled. The Bannahalli (Malavalli taluka) stone inscription dated A. D. 1313 contains an account of how such disputes between the Sthānikas were settled. There was a dispute between Malliyanṇa's son Mallappanāga Paṇḍita, the Sthānāpati of ...nganvasadi, and Senāpati Paṭṭāṇḍail's son Vanavan, the Sthānāpati of Ānaivaśadi (Ānebasadi), in respect of some villages and a sum of 1,320 *gadyāṇas* received on various occasions, some during the time of the Hoysala king Narasimha III, some during the time of Rāyappa, and some at other times (specified). The arbitrators were the *Mahāpradhāna* Dāḍiya Someya Daṇṇāyaka's son Kālāñji Gummaya, the heads of the seven *puras* (towns), the Sthānāpatis of the five *maṭhas* of Talakāḍu, and several others (named). This assembly of arbitrators sent for both the parties and brought about a reconciliation by an equal division of the villages and the sum of money. Further, it is interesting to note, it was decided that since Ānaivaśadi-Ālvar and Vēlaikarīśvaram-Uḍaiyar were not on good terms, the villages should be amicably divided; that Ānaivaśadi should receive interior villages, gardens, trees over ground, wells underground, and a proper share of the houses in the Aḍaippāri street in exchange for the houses already taken possession of by Kuḷandac-Cenāpati; and that an equal division should be made of Malipalli situated near Takkūr in Tenkarai which had been granted for the worship of the god. Thus did the arbitrators grant a stone *sāsana* to the Sthānāpati Mallappanāga Paṇḍita.¹³⁶

Important as the above record certainly is from the point of view of the method by which arbitration in civil matters was conducted with the aid of the people, it is also interesting from the standpoint of the Sthānikas themselves whose disputes, especially those pertaining to their lands around temples, had to be settled with the sanction, and in the presence of, an official of the State, who was to work in conjunction with the representatives of the people. In other words, since the Sthānikas were officials in charge of public

135. *E. C. X.* Kl. 39, p. 9.

136. *M. A. R. for 1920*, p. 35.

charities, disputes concerning their lands had to be settled by public bodies.

The close contact between the Sthānikas and the representatives of public bodies and of the State is seen further in one of the Kolāramma temple stone inscriptions dated A.D. 1379 and found at Kolār itself. Devappa Jiya, the head of the Devī temple (*ā dēviyara sthānakka mukhyarāda*) had somehow or other distinguished himself. He had, therefore, to be honoured; and this was done by an assembly of the Mahantas of all the world, others (named), all the farmers, subjects, and all the Sthānikas of the temple of Kolāla, led by the *Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Naganna Oḍeyar's son Depanna Oḍeyar, the viceroy of the Vijayanagara monarch Harihara Rāya II. This assembly having bound on Devappa Jiya the badge of *Jiya of the Devī temple*, granted to him all the the lands and dues belonging to Andiganahari village in Kolālanāḍ, free of all imposts in perpetuity. Moreover it was said that whatever lands of Jiyas of the various temples were attached to that Jiya badge would also belong to Devappa of that temple.¹³⁷

The above instances, no doubt, show in what honour the Sthānikas were held by the people in the fourteenth century A. D. But their high status is revealed better in the following epigraphs in which the monarch himself addressed them directly concerning the welfare of the religion and the State. All these instances belong to the reign of the last great Hoysala monarch Vira Ballāla III, and are dated A.D. 1301. We have elsewhere shown what a critical age it was in which this gallant monarch lived.¹³⁸ The great enemy with whom this ruler waged continuous battles were the Muhammadans. In the year A.D. 1301 things appeared rather dark for the Hoysala monarch. For the clouds of foreign invasion were gathering ominously on the political horizon;¹³⁹ and the Hoysala king naturally looked to the protection of the most sacred trust the people had given him—the preservation of the *dharma* and of the honour of the state.

In order to realize the former object he had to take into his confidence the heads of all the religious institutions in the land. And in A.D. 1301 he did this by a most liberal policy unparalleled in the history of southern and western India. Quite a number of stone inscriptions, all of them dated in A.D. 1301, reveal the policy

137. *E. C. X.* Kl. 113, p. 44.

138. Saletore, *Social & Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire*, I, pp. 2, seq.

139. Saletore, *ibid.*, I. p. 14.

of co-operation and liberality which king Ballāḷa Deva III inaugurated. The Someśvara temple stone inscription found at Guñjūru, Bangalore tāluka, informs us that that monarch intimated the following to the heads of the *maṭhas* and the Sthānikas situated in the Hesara-Kundāṇi kingdom, Viriviāḍu, Maśandinaḍu Muruśunāḍu, Śokkanāyanparru, Peṇṇaiyāṇḍarmaḍanaḍu, Aimbūḷugūrnāḍu, Elavūrnāḍu, Kuvaḷālanāḍu, Kaivāranāḍu, Iḷaippākkanāḍu, and "all the other *nāḍus*", thus—" [On the date specified], we have remitted all kinds of taxes, including the tax on looms, the tax on goldsmiths, tribute and tolls, hitherto paid in the gifts to the temples etc., (named) of our kingdom and granted the same, with pouring of water, for certain gods, to provide for worship, offerings of rice, enjoyments and temple repairs.

"Accordingly, be pleased to take possession of the villages of Śurikkutṭai, Śingamankutṭai, Kōvaśamuttiram, and others which are the tax-free temple property of the god Somanāthadevar of Kuñṇiyūr, make adequate provision for worship, offerings of rice, enjoyments and temple repairs, and live happily, praying for the prosperity of ourselves and our kingdom."¹⁴⁰

Again in the same year king Vīra Ballāḷa III addressed to all the heads of the *maṭhas* and the *sthānas* of all the temples situated in the eleven *nāḍus* mentioned above and "in all other *nāḍus*", as the Maḍivāḷa Someśvara temple inscription found at Hūḍi, Bangalore tāluka, relates, and remitted likewise all kinds of taxes (enumerated in detail), ordering the Sthānikas and heads of the *maṭhas* to take possession of four villages (named) and of separate pieces of land which were the *devadāna* property of the god Śembisvaram-uḍaiya-nāyanār of Tāmaraikkaraḷ in Veppūruparru. The main object of this royal bounty was, as in the previous instance, "the prosperity of ourselves and of our kingdom."¹⁴¹

An identical royal order was passed in the same year, as is mentioned in the Dharmēśvara temple stone inscription found at Ayigaṇḍapura, Nelamangala tāluka, Mysore state. This too was addressed to the heads of all the *maṭhas* and the *sthānas* in the temples situated in the eleven *nāḍus* spoken of above. The taxes remitted were the same, and the main object of the grant was like that of the two previous records. But the name of the temple to which provision was made is missing in the defaced portion of record. And unlike the two previous records, this royal order hailing from Nelamangala ends thus—That the royal grant was

140. *E. C.* IX. Bn. 51, p. 11. On its date, See *ibid* page, n. (2)

141. *Ibid*, Bn. 65, p. 14.

"under the protection of the kingdom, of the inhabitants of the *nāḍu* and of the Māheśvaras."¹⁴²

A copy of the same royal order dated in the same year was published in a stone inscription in the Gangādhareśvara temple at Madivāḷa, Malūr taluka, Mysore State. It was likewise addressed to the Sthānikas and heads of the *maṭhas* in the eleven *nāḍus* mentioned above.¹⁴³ Another copy of the royal order dated in the same year was engraved on the basement of the Someśvara temple at Lakkūr also in the same taluka.¹⁴⁴ These royal orders end in an identical manner which reveals the earnestness of the monarch, thus:— "For the benefit of ourselves and our kingdom, be pleased to see that the worship, offerings of rice, enjoyments and temple repairs are adequately provided for, and pray for our prosperity".

That there were Sthānikas also in other *nāḍus* is proved by another similar royal order passed also in the same year (A. D. 1301), but engraved on stone near the Kamateśvara temple at Nandi, Ohikka Ballāpura taluka. In this royal order in addition to the eleven *nāḍus* mentioned above, the following eleven are also said to have contained Sthānikas and heads of the *maṭhas*—Veppūr, Erumarai, Kaḷavāranāḍu, Ambaḍakki, Nonḍanguḷi, Tekkalnāḍu, Eyiḷnāḍu, Tagadaināḍu, Puṛamalaiṇāḍu (*alias* Adigaimānāḍu), Payyūraparru, and Pulliyūrnāḍu. The taxes remitted in this instance were similar to those mentioned in the previous order. Only the heads of the *maṭhas* and *sthānas* in the temple of the god Tirunandi *alias* southern Kailāsa, were ordered to enjoy the wet and dry lands as a *sarvamānya* gift. The object of this royal edict was similar to that of the previous ones; and this charity was placed, as in the two instances mentioned above, under the protection of the king, of the inhabitants of the *nāḍu*, and of the Māheśvaras.¹⁴⁵

Two inscriptions found in the Cokkanātha and Someśvara temples at Domlūr, both dated also in A.D. 1301, are similar forms of royal circulars addressed by the same Hoysala monarch to all the heads of *maṭhas* and *sthānas* in the eleven *nāḍus* beginning with the Hesara-Kundāpi kingdom spoken of above. One of these registers the grant of remission of specified taxes and of lands in Dombalur, to the god Śokkaperumāḷ of Dombalur in Iḷaipākka-

142. *Ibid.* Nl. 38, p. 35.

143. *E. C.* X, Mr. 100, pp. 176-77.

144. *Ibid.* Mr. 71, pp. 170-71.

145. *Ibid.* CB. 20, pp. 201-202. See *ibid.* p. n. (1) for a remark on the date of this record.

nāḍu; while the other mentions a similar gift to the god Somanātha at Dombalūr, the lands given as gifts being situated at Dombalūr, and Palaśur.¹⁴⁶ As in other records registering royal remissions, the object of these grants was the same, *viz.*, "the prosperity of ourselves and our kingdom".

From the standpoint of the Sthānikas, these royal orders mark the highest limit to which the Sthānikas reached in the course of their history. For not only have we the fact of the Sthānikas having been spread over the length and breadth of Hoysala Empire, but also the fact that the monarch himself directly addressed them, remitting many taxes to them, and in all instances requested them to look after the religious prosperity of the country and to pray for the safety of the monarch and the welfare of the land. Such royal orders are unique in the history of southern and western India; and they reveal the deep trust which the Hoysala monarch reposed in, and the high regard which he had for, the Sthānikas of his wide Empire, whose co-operation with the State was of such great importance to the religious stability of the country. These records alone embodying the orders passed by king Ballala III are enough to demonstrate the universal influence which the Sthānikas wielded in southern India in the first quarter of the fourteenth century A.D.

FIFTEENTH CENTURY A.D.

Coming to the fifteenth century A.D., we find that the Sthānikas, while maintaining their ancient position and dignity, continued to do much good to the country in their capacity as priests and managers of temples. Their public work earned for them adequate reward at the hands of the State. Before we narrate this interesting side of their history, it is desirable that we should give a few instances to show that in the fifteenth century, as in the previous ages, the Sthānikas were managers and priests of temples, that they granted lands to worthy people, along with others, that they were cited as witnesses to deeds of public charity, and that they enjoyed special privileges at the hands of the State. But their real importance is seen in those inscriptions which mention their public work.

A few examples may suffice to show how in addition to the very many places which the Sthānikas controlled mentioned in the previous pages, they were also the custodians of temples in other

146. *M.A.R.* for 1911, p. 50.

parts of the land. For instance, the Sthānikas were the priests and managers of the Ten Kēris of Bārakūru, one of the Ālupa capitals of South Kanara, and of the Śīva temple (now converted into a Vaiṣṇava shrine) at Phalamāru, also in the Uḍipi taluka of the same district. One of the stone inscriptions in the former place, calls Cikkanna as the Sthānapati of the Ten Kēris (*i.e.*, ten streets) of Bārakūru (*Bārakūru hattu kēriya sthānāpati Cikkanna*). He made a request (*binnaḥam*) to the State in Śaka 1329 (A.D. 1407-8) when the monarch was Bukka Rāya II.¹⁴⁷ That the original Śīva temple of Phalamāru was once ruled by a Sthānika is proved by a damaged stone record found there, and dated Śaka 1323 (A.D. 1401-2), which mentions the Sthānāpati (name effaced) of that temple.¹⁴⁸

In the Telugu land as well we come across Sthānāpatīs managing temples. The Bhīmeśvara temple stone inscription at Peṭlūru, Nellore district, informs us that in A.D. 1406-7 the Sthānāpati of that temple was Malla Jīyyaru. This temple being in ruins, was reconstructed in that year by Anna Reḍḍi Sigi Reḍḍi at the request of all classes of devotees of Peṭlūru.¹⁴⁹

According to one of the stone inscriptions found at Bankipura, Shimoga taluka, the head of the Vankāpura (Bankiyapura) temple (*tat-sthāna-samrakṣakartta*) was Cennapācārya, the son of Puruṣottamāryya, a Vaikhānasa of the Kaśyapa *gotra*. The temple which he managed was that of the god Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa for which many specified dues had been given by the order of the Vijayanagara ruler Harihara Rāya II. It is interesting to observe that this temple was caused to be erected "by that Mahārāya's order", as the inscription dated about A.D. 1413 relates.¹⁵⁰ No other evidence is required to prove that the Sthānikas were servants of the State in Vijayanagara times; and that they were the priests and managers of temples which were constructed by the rulers themselves.

The damaged Kuravalli stone inscription (Tirthahalli taluka) dated about A.D. 1424, affirms that the son of the *Āḷvaprabhu* Bommiyakka's son, whose name is effaced in the record, on account of his marriage, sold certain specified lands to the Sthānika Bōvaṇṇa Ayya, the son of Devaṇṇa Ayya. Although the name of the temple is not mentioned in the inscription, we suppose it was the same Viśveśvara temple near which the record was found.¹⁵¹

147. 154 B. of 1901; S. I. I., VII. 346, p. 206.

148. 87 of 1901; S. I. I. VII, 267, p. 137.

149. Butterworth-Chetty, *Nellore Inscriptions*, II. p. 608.

150. E. O. VII. Sh. 30, pp. 15-16.

151. *Ibid.*, VIII. Tl. 175., p. 199.

One of the Śitibetṭa stone inscriptions dated about A.D. 1468 relates that Apparasar, the household officer of Rāmarasar of the Mari palace, and Basavaṇṇa, granted to the Sthānika priest Bayirayya of the temple of the god Bhairava of Sīhati, three *honnu* and three *paṇa* from the revenue of Turuvālahalḷi in Pulinaḍu. This endowment was for the god Bhairava of Sīhati.¹⁵² On the basis of this inscription it may be asserted that the Sthānikas as priests of temples, received grants of money on behalf of temples which they managed.

In Kallūru hobli of the Gubbi tāluka, Mysore State, is the Kapule Siddha Mallikārjuna temple. The Sthānika priest of this temple in A.D. 1470, during the reign of the Vijayanagara king Virūpākṣa Mahārāya, was Somayya Deva. His younger sister Honni Devī is also mentioned in the same record, but the context cannot be determined because the inscription is damaged. It may be noted, however, that the temple of Mallikārjuna had been restored by Kallarasiyamma, the wife of the *Mahāsāmanta* whose name, too, is effaced in the record. She had richly endowed the temple with specified lands.¹⁵³

Of the famous Vaiṣṇava temple of Ahobalam, Nandyāl tāluka, Kurnool district, the Sthānikas were the trustees in the reign of Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya the Great.¹⁵⁴ The Paṇikeśvara temple in the same tāluka, was also under the Sthānikas. This is proved by a stone record found in that temple and dated A. D. 1503 which informs us that during the reign of the Vijayanagara monarch Immaḍi Narasinga Mahārāya, a grant of specified land was made for the merit of the king and of Narasa Nāyaka, evidently by the ruler himself, to the four Sthānikas of the Paṇikeśvara temple, for building a village and conducting the services in the same temple.¹⁵⁵

There is the well known temple of Mañjunātha at Kadri, a suburb of Mangalore in South Kanara. The trustees and priests of this temple were Sthānikas. This is proved by a stone inscription found in that temple and dated Śaka 1397 (A. D. 1475) in which the following is narrated :— That during the reign of the Vijayanagara monarch Virūpākṣa Deva, when his *Mahāpradhāna* Singaṇṇa Daṇṇāyaka was carrying on the administration of the Empire, by the order of the latter Viṭṭharasa Oḍeyar was governing the Bārakūru-rājya in Tuḷuva. The local chieftains who carried on the work of administration in Tuḷuva were the Cauṭars and the

152. *Ibid.* X. Kl. 36, p. 9

153. *Ibid.* XII. Gb. 30, p. 23.

154. For further details, refer to *Ep. Rep. S. Circle for 1915*, pp. 94-95.

155. 166 of 1913; Rangacharya, *Top List*, II, p. 967.

Bangars. Attached to the Mangalūru-rājya was the Kadariya temple of which the four Sthānikas by name Ravalapāli, Gaṇapaṇṇa Ālūva, Rāyara Senabova, and Gomma Senabova, agreeing among themselves gave a sale deed written in stone, and specified in detail, to Maṅgaṇātha Oḍeyar.¹⁵⁶

But the Sthānikas could also co-operate with the representatives of the people in bestowing honours upon worthy citizens. We have seen that this was one of their public functions in the pre-Vijayanagara days. Mangarasa, the son of Mahadeva of the Gautama *gotra*, had built a tank in Vāṇiyarahalli in Hodeṇaḍ, and constructed the Hiri-Mangasamudra. The stone inscription found below the Muḷlukunte tank at Vāṇiganahalli in the Mūlbāgal taluka, and dated A. D. 1407, continues to relate that on the completion of this work of public utility, the Sthānikas of the goddess Gauri of Uttanūr Maḍavāla, the mortgagees (?) and the citizens gave Mangarasa a *śāsana* for rent free rice land as a *kaṭṭu godage* for the tank, as follows:— Two parts (in ten) of the rice land below and within that tank were given as *kaṭṭu godage*; and two parts (in ten) were given to Mangarasa's children, free of all taxes, in perpetuity.¹⁵⁷

A more interesting example of Sthānikas rewarding not ordinary citizens but Brahmans themselves for having done some public work is afforded in the stone inscription found in the Nācāramma temple at Mūlbāgal itself. This inscription is dated A.D. 1416, and it refers to the reign of king Pratāpa Deva Rāya (*i. e.*, Deva Rāya II) when his *Mahāpradhāna* Nāgaṇṇa Oḍeyar was placed over the Mūlbāgal kingdom. The officer under this viceroy was Annanadāni Oḍeyar, who "was maintaining the proper *dharma*s, and firmly protecting the Mūlbāgal kingdom." The inscription continues to relate that "by order of the original goddess of Mūlbāgal, Muḷuvāyi Nācidevi", her Sthānikas Balipa, Maṇiya, and Mārāpa, the sons of Keśava Perumāle, and the latter's younger brother Āvāmbāla, agreeing among themselves, gave to Śivarātri Viṭṭhaṇṇa, Mallanna, and other Brahmans a *śāsana* as follows—"The Araḷi dam in the Paḷāru river in the Katariyahalli *śīme* belonging to our Muḷuvāyi Nācidevi, having been breached from time immemorial and ruined down to the level of the ground, in order that you may expend much money and restore the dam so as to form a tank, and build there a village named Muḷuvāyi-Nācīpura, we grant to you the tract of land bounded as follows (boundaries enumerated in detail)—, in which you may cut down the jungle and form fields. And the rice lands under and in the

156, 27 E. of 1901; S. I. I. VII. 194, p. 88.

157. E. C. X. Mb. 131, p. 109.

area of the tank which you construct, dividing them into four parts one part will belong to the treasury of our Muḷuvāyi Nācidevi, and in consideration of your having expended much money of your own, and constructed the tank, the remaining three parts we grant, with the land (before mentioned), to your Brahmans as an *agrahāra*, free of all imposts, from our Muḷuvāyi Nācidevi. All the usual rights of the villages named Muḷuvāyi Nācipura which you build, we also grant. If any damage arises to your tank, it belongs to your Brahmans to repair it." This agreement was inscribed on stone "in front of our Muḷuvāyi Nācidevi" (temple).¹⁵⁸

About sixty-six years later (*circa* A.D. 1482) the Sthānikas of the temple of the god Bhairava (in Sihati in Kolār ?) gave similar expression to their public spirit when they bestowed an agreement (*sādāna*) on the Cenji hill Gavunda Cimi Jiya and his sons Bayirappa and Cōku Bayica. The Késavināyakanahalli stone inscription (Kolār tāluka) which contains these details is dated A.D. 1482. It relates that to the father and two sons who had built a new the Baicakere (tank) below the old breached one at Sihati (Śrīpati), and made a sluice, and fixed the money payment for the land under it, the Sthānikas of the god Bhairava gave the revenue of the rice fields so formed two shares to be divided among themselves and to be enjoyed by them and their posterity, while one share was reserved for the Sthānikas themselves as "*dharma* to the god's treasury". The tank was the inalienable property of the donees, who could sow and raise any crops on the rice fields.¹⁵⁹

The evidence of the above inscription, in addition to that concerning the award of honours to worthy citizens which we have cited above, proves that the lands enjoyed by the Sthānikas around the temples which they managed, were not their private property, but were considered as "*dharma* to the god's treasury". That is to say, in all instances the Sthānikas, as the reader must have realized from the numerous instances we have already given above, were trustees on behalf of the god or goddesses in temples.

One more instance may be adduced to show that the Sthānikas, who rewarded worthy citizens with grants of land, did so in their capacity as trustees of the property of the deity in the temple. The Rayagundahalli stone inscription, Mūlāgal tāluka, dated A.D. 1496, tells us that Devappa, the son of Koṇḍappa-Timmaṇṇa, and the Sthānika of the temple of the god Narasimha,

158. E. C. X. Mb. 7, pp. 72-73.

159. E. C. X. Kl. 15, p. 4.

granted a *kaṭṭu-goḍage* to Alapa's son Narasimhadeva. The reason why the Sthānika priest granted a *kaṭṭu-goḍage* gift to Narasimhadeva was because the latter had expended money and caused a virgin tank to be constructed in the Māvinahaḷḷi village to the west of the old tank of Guṇḍalanahaḷḷi, forming an embankment with plenty of earth, building it with stone, fixing a stone sluice and making it secure with bricks and mortar, thoroughly completing the tank in every detail. For this work of public utility the Sthānika Devappa "by the order of the god Narasimha" (*i.e.*, Kadiri, Lakṣmī Narasimha of the village of Guṇḍalanahaḷḷi *alias* Narasimhapura in Hodeṇāḍ) gave four parts of the rice raised on the lands under the tank to the donee, along with very many privileges enumerated in detail.¹⁶⁰

Another aspect of the public character of the Sthānikas is given in the interesting record found in the Īśvara temple at Dodḍa Belahāḷu, Huṇṣūr taluka, and dated A.D. 1423. This stone epigraph tells us that the Sthānikas were called as witnesses to a deed of public charity. Tippe Śetti of the Vijayanagara treasury, was a very pious and superstitious soul. He dedicated to the god Tirumala the tank which he had constructed in order that merit might accrue to his parents. But this consecration had to be done publicly, according to the usage of the day. And Tippe Śetti did it in A.D. 1423 in the presence of the chief and holy meritorious Brahmans, the Sthānikas, the Nambis, the body-servants of the god Tirumala, and Viṛaṇṇa-aya of Kariyamāranahaḷḷi. And to these witnesses were added others—the Fish, the Tortoise, the Boar, the eight Regents of the Compass, the snake charmers, the tellers of omens by lizards, and such other "sacred persons," of an unusually strange category.¹⁶¹

But as in the previous ages, the Sthānikas were prominent not only because they were called as witnesses to deeds of public charity, but also because they possessed privileges and were entitled to special exemptions. This is proved by the following epigraphs one of which was found in the Kaṇveśvara temple at Beḷḷūr, Narsapura hobḷi, Kolār taluka. In this inscription dated A. D. 1406, it is related that by order of the Vijayanagara monarch Deva Rāya (I), the *Mahāpradhāna* Bommaṇṇa Daṇṇāyaka's son (unnamed) granted the villages of Bayilanakuṇṭe and Tujilahaḷḷi, the former of which was given by the Kannara Deva Rāya, and the latter by the Vijayanagara Emperor himself, for the god Soma of Beḷḷūr *alias* Viṣṇuvardhanacaturvedimangalam, together with all

160. *E. C. X. Mb.* 172, p. 116.

161. *Ibid.* IV. Hs. 27, p. 86.

the lands and rights (specified) pertaining thereto. The concluding portion of the grant affirms that by that order of the Vijayanagara Emperor, Malidevi Rāṇi, the daughter of Duḥiniḍava Rāṇi, remitted the taxes (given in detail) payable for the houses of the Sthānikas in that country and the other sacred buildings. How the office of the Sthānikas was connected with the *sthāna* attached to a temple is proved in the text of the inscription which recounts the exemption thus—*a nirūpadim Duḥi-Niḍava Rāṇiyara maga (magaḥ?) Malidevi Rāṇiyaru ā śimeya dēvara Sthānikadalū Sthānikara mane-modalāda madavaḥike saḥu...raya-kāṇika sunka teravāḥike saha sarvama...ā dēvara...gaḥu...teruva vibhūti...*¹⁶²

The Someśvara temple inscription found at Cidaravalli, Mysore district, corroborates the statement made above concerning the office of the Sthānikas. This inscription which is dated A. D. 1420 of the reign of the Vijayanagara ruler Deva Rāya II, informs us that lands were given for the office (*sthāna*) of the temple. Such lands were called *sthāna bhūmi*. The inscription registers the remission of taxes on houses, gardens, and tanks belonging to the *sthāna-bhūmi* of the temple (*yī dēvara sthāna-bhūmi oḷagāda mantōtā kere mānyavendu koṭṭu*), including the land belonging to the Sthānikas Rayaḍe, Sōmayaḍe, and Kētaḍe of the temple of Somayyadeva at Cidaravalli. The donors were the Purubovas Guḍḍayaṇṇa Vayicanna of Mallināthapura, who was the chief of the forty-two *puras* of Talakāḍunāḍ, Mādayya Somayya of Sindeyapura, Dema of Kāmagonḍanapura, and Sāmbudeva of Cidaravallipura. Certain Gauḍas (named) also joined in making the grant which the donors inscribed on stone.¹⁶³

There were two reasons why the houses of the Sthānikas were exempted from taxation. Firstly, the Sthānikas being

162. *E. C. X.* Kl. 94, p. 29 the text clearly says *Duḥi-niḍi varāṇiyara maga*, etc. Now both Niḍivarāṇi and Malidevirāṇi were princesses. How the latter could be termed *maga* (son) is not intelligible, except on the supposition that Malidevi Rāṇi assumed the dignity of a male ruler as queen Rudrāmbā had done in the Telugu country. As regards exemptions, cf. Kl. 100, p. 30 where the Nambis seem to get a similar privilege.

163. *M. A. R. for 1933*, pp. 268-269. Dr. Krishna takes the name Rāyaḍe Someyaḍe Kētaḍe to be the name of one person. (*Ibid*, p. 269) But it is doubtful if this were so; for the plural ending *yivara maṇṇugola*, etc., suggests that the names belonged to three different persons. Dr. Krishna also makes Guḍḍayaṇṇa and others donees. I would make them donors. Otherwise the record makes no sense, and we cannot understand the significance of the statement *purabōvagalum..... mānyavendu koṭṭu*.—B. A. S.

managers and custodians of temples were public servants, and as such were entitled to some special consideration at the hands of the State. And, secondly, the Sthānikas, especially in the fifteenth century A. D., had given ample evidence of their zeal to promote public weal. There are many examples of the public benefactions of the Sthānikas. The Ujenīgrāma stone inscription found at Beḍarapura, Kūnigal taluka, Mysore State, is one of them. This record dated A. D. 1429 refers to the reign of the Vijayanagara Emperor Pratāpa Rāya (*i. e.*, Deva Rāya II), when Bayicarasa, the son of Ujenī Rāma Gauḍa, Muttu Gauḍa, the son of Masana Gauḍa, and all the older Gauḍas and subjects of Ujenī granted by a *sāsana* a *koḍage* gift to Cāmarasa, the son of Ujenī Bayicarasa. The reason why such a gift was given was that Cāmarasa and the Sthānikas had provided the funds and entered into an agreement for the construction of the tank to the east of the town. On the completion of the tank, the donors mentioned above granted specified lands as free gift to the Sthānikas and Cāmarasa.¹⁶⁴

The Sthānikas could add to public welfare in other directions as well. For instance, when a need arose in a town to have the calendar-makers or *pañcāṅgadavaru*, they applied directly to the State and had those useful functionaries established in a town. In A. D. 1472 in the reign of the Vijayanagara king Virūpākṣa Rāya, as is related in the Svayambhūveśvara temple stone inscription found at Maḍivāḷa, Bowringpēt taluka, Singarasa, one of the two officials under the Bētamangala officer Linga Rāja, came to Bētamangala. He came to Bētamangala because the Sthānikas of the locality had petitioned to him to establish *pañcāṅgadavaru* (or calendar-makers) in that country, and grant them a *dharma sāsana* for the exaltation of the god (*sthānadavaru bandu yī śimege.....la-sthāpanavanu māḍi dēvara satiyali pañcāṅgadavara dharma-sāsanavanu barasi koḍabēku endu kōralūgi*). On which Singarasa marked out the four boundaries, had them stamped with the seal, and evidently had the calendar-makers established in that town (for the record stops here).¹⁶⁵

The Sthānikas of the god Bhairava Sthati (Śrīpati) had once paid twenty-eight *gadyāṇas* for the wages of the watchmen. This was, indeed, a work of much public good. Therefore, Narasaya Deva Mahārāya, the son of *Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* Timmaya Deva Mahā-arasu, in the reign of the Vijayanagara monarch Immaḍi Narasinga Rāya, in A.D. 1495, as is related in one of the stone inscriptions found in the Śitibetṭa, Kolār taluka, gave to Gūliya and

164. *E. C.* XII. Kg. 18, p. 35.

165. *E. C.* X. Bp. 19, p. 139.

the other Sthānikas of the god Bhairava of Sthati a *śāsana* by which he granted the alms and tribute to the Kōjalaśīme within the jurisdiction of his nāyakaship, for the offerings of the god Bhairava for a new car festival to be held for nine days, and for the expenses of extra sacrifices, lamps, and offerings, in the same temple.¹⁶⁶

SIXTEENTH CENTURY A.D.

In the sixteenth century the Sthānikas maintained their traditional high dignity and importance of their office. They were still priests and managers of temples. As trustees of temples which were public institutions, they granted lands and rewards to worthy recipients; and in the same capacity they approached directly the State in connection with important public matters. The epigraphs of the previous centuries enabled us to affirm that there was a very close contact between the State and the Sthānikas. The records of the sixteenth century A.D. help us to assert that the Sthānikas were appointed by the State, and as such were servants of the State.

In about A.D. 1500 the priest of the Bhimeśvara temple in the Chintāmani taluka, Mysore State, was the Sthānika Nāṇḍa Jiya. Along with some other Sthānikas whose names are effaced in this record found at Guṭṭahalli, he made a grant for the same god.¹⁶⁷ The temple priest of the god Śrīdeva of the Tēkaśīme was the Sthānika Nayanārayya, who, as is related in the damaged stone record discovered at Timmanāyakanahalli, Tēkaḷ hobli, and dated A.D. 1508, received a grant in connection with the construction of the Tippasamudra. The donor was evidently Saḷuva Gopa Raja.¹⁶⁸

The same Nayanārayya, called Nayinārayya in the inscription found in the Kamaṭheśvara temple at Tēkaḷ, was the recipient of a gift of the village of Huḷadevanahalli at the hands of Yaṛapa Nāyaka, the son of Pareyada Rāma Nāyaka, and the lord of the village of Huḷadevanahalli belonging to the Tēkaśīme which was included in the eighteen *nāḍus*. The grant was made in A.D. 1542 when the Emperor Acyuta Rāya was ruling, to Nayanārayya, who is called the Sthānika of the gods Somaya and Rāmayalinga of Tēkaḷ. The Sthānika was to provide for offerings of rice to the gods, and the object of the grant is stated thus:— “As a charity of Acyuta Rāya.” This last clause enables us to affirm that the gift was made at the royal bidding.¹⁶⁹

166. *Ibid.*, Kl. 34, p. 8.

167. *E. C. X.* Et. 134, p. 268.

168. *Ibid.*, Mr. 46, p. 167.

169. *M. A. R. for 1912-1913*, p. 48.

In A.D. 1532 when the same Vijayanagara Emperor was ruling, Kerega Timmarasa was assigned the village of Śāntigrāma for his office of *amara-nāyaka*. This noble was presented the village of Vogarahalli for the daily offerings of the god Dharmēśvara and of the processional image Candrasekhara, and for feeding ten Brahmans. The entire endowment was made over to the Sthānika priest Dēvarubhaṭṭa. This is related in the stone inscription found in the Dharmēśvara temple at Grāma, Hassan taluka, Mysore State.¹⁷⁰

That the Sthānikas were, indeed, the priests in a temple is further proved by one of the Basavāpura stone records (Chāma-rājanagara taluka), assigned by Rice to A.D. 1552. In this inscription it is said that by order of the god Anilēśvara (*śrī-Anilēśvara-nirūpadim*) Timmarasayya, together with the Sthānika and the Senabova (neither being named), made a gift of *koḍagi* free of all imposts, for the celestial *linga*.¹⁷¹

The managers and priests of the Someśvara temple in Muḷbāgal were Sthānikas. This is related in the Padmatīrtha stone inscription dated only in the cyclic year Paridhāvi but of the reign of the Vijayanagara Emperor Sadaśiva Rāya (A.D. 1542—A.D. 1567). According to this inscription some land in the Muḷuvāyinaḍu was granted, free of all imposts, as *bhaṭavṛtti* to the Sthānikas of the temple of the god Someśvara of Muḷbāgal. This fragmentary record does not unfortunately give the name of the donor. But the fact that the land granted was meant as *bhaṭavṛtti* (subsistence grant to priests) is enough to prove that the Sthānikas were Bhaṭṭas or Brahmans.¹⁷²

Why were such lands granted to the Sthānikas, and what precisely were the duties that were expected of them? These questions are answered in the Virabhadra temple stone inscription found at Hassan. It is dated A.D. 1562, and it mentions also the same Vijayanagara Emperor. In this year a grant of specified taxes was made in the village of Kuduriguṇḍi (mod. Kudureguṇḍi, Dudda hōbli, Hassan taluka), by Bukkappa Nāyaka, a subordinate of Era Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka. The donees were the Sthānikas (unnamed) of the same Virabhadra temple. The object of the grant was "that prosperity and merit might accrue to Bayappa Nāyaka's son Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka." The duties of the Sthānikas are mentioned thus in the same record:—"We, Bukkappa Nāyaka, younger

170. *E. C. V.* Hn. 115, p. 33.

171. *E. C. IV.* Ch. 140, p. 19.

172. *M. A. R.* for 1924, p. 60.

brother of Tammappa Nāyaka, the son of Kācappa Nāyaka, have, while granting the above with pouring of water, ordered that food offerings might be made to the god Virabhadra of Kuduriguṇḍi, both during the day and in the evening, and granted this charter of gift (*dharmaśāsana*) for carrying on the service of offering incense, lights, and food to the said god in order that Bayappa Nāyaka's son Kṛṣṇapa Nāyaka-ayya might rule over many more kingdoms."¹⁷³

One of the features we noted concerning the Sthānikas in the previous pages in the pre-Vijayanagara age was that pertaining to their public spirit which prompted them to award distinctions to persons who had done some service to the people. This singular feature still marked the Sthānikas in the sixteenth century A.D. An inscription on a boulder near the Venkaṭaramanasvāmi temple at Rājagunḍahalli, Mūlbagal taluka, dated A.D. 1503, illustrates our statement. A citizen named Kadiri Mārasimhadeva had in that year constructed a new tank in Guṇḍalahalli which village belonged to the offerings of the god Kadiri Narasimha of Mūlbagal. On his completing this work of public utility, the Sthānikas of the god Kadiri Narasimha, by name Viṭṭhayya and Kuppaya, the latter being the nephew (*aṇiya*) of Anantapa, granted to Kadiri Narasimhadeva a *sūgubāṇiya vōle* (or cultivation roll) of the rice land below the tank. In this deed of reward the Sthānikas said that deducting his *daśavanda* rice fields under the tank which he had caused to be constructed, they had granted him according to the rule for cultivation of the rice lands of the temple, by measurement eight *khaṇḍugas* for seven *khaṇḍugas* of *koḍage*. How considerate the Sthānikas were is seen in the next two clauses of the deed of reward:—If the water in the tank failed and the crop was lost, the Sthānikas would share equally (the loss). If the water in the tank was insufficient, and had to be lifted, the Sthānikas would reduce the contract in the same proportion as those in the neighbourhood.¹⁷⁴

Some such reason as the above might have induced the Samsthānakulu (*i.e.*, the Sthānikas) of the temple of Kailāsanātha and Bhīma in Chilamakūru, Nellore district, when in A.D. 1518–19, as is narrated in a stone record found at that place, they granted in perpetuity one *kuccala* of dry land on the boundary and

173. *M. A. R.* for 1935, p. 82. An undated and damaged record found in the Rāmeśvara temple of Heggōṭha, Beḍapura, Chamarājanagara taluka, registers a gift of land to the Sthānika Ningayya of the temple of Rāmeśvara. *E. C.* IV. Ch. 106, text, p. 40.

174. *E. C.* X. Mb. 173, p. 117.

ten *kunṭas* of wet land as *sarvamānya* gift to Mēdaramēṭṭa Singiriyanāyūḍu.¹⁷⁵

Indeed, we have valid reasons to maintain that in the sixteenth century A.D. the Sthānikas, in their capacity as trustees of temples, were not slow in recognizing the worth of deserving citizens. They even co-operated with the officials of the State in granting rewards to such people. For instance, in A.D. 1530, as is told in an inscription found near Elavaguḷi, Malūr taluka, Mysore State, during the reign of the Emperor Acyuta Rāya, the Sthānikas (not named) of Tēkaḷnāḍu, included in the eighteen *nāḍus*, and Varadapa, the Agent for the Affairs of the Vijayanagara viceroy, whose name is effaced in the record, granted land to the Senabova Timmarasa for having built a tank.¹⁷⁶

The precise reason which made the Sthānikas of the god Dharmēśvara at Hosahalligrāma, Hosakōṭe taluka, by name Hariyapa, Cikana, the son of Caiṇa Jiya, Marasaya Anṇapaya, the son of Cikapa Caiṇa Jiya, and Hiriyaṇa, the son of Mañcigaya, give a *sāsana* to Kappayyapurusa, cannot be made out in the effaced record dated about A.D. 1562 and found in the same Dharmēśvara temple.¹⁷⁷ We can only assume that the gift was made in recognition of some work of public utility.

Nothing illustrates the importance and power of the Sthānikas in the sixteenth century as the following record found in the Karivaradarājaperumāl temple in Āragaḷūr, Salem district. This epigraph is dated Śaka 1441, Pramāthin, Mithuna, Śu. di. 13 Friday, which works out correctly to A.D. 1519, June the 10th Friday. On this day three Sthānikas of the temple of Perumāl Karayivar went on a deputation to the Emperor at Vijayanagara, and complained of the injustice done by the authorities (*rājagāram*) stationed at Deviyakurucci, a village belonging to the temple. The chief *amaram* Timmarasa introduced them to the king, got their grievances redressed, presented them each with a garland, a head dress, a horse, and an umbrella, and granted 900 *kuli* of wet land at Ponparappi and at Deviyakurucci as a *sarvamānya* gift.¹⁷⁸ The ruler who is referred to in this record could only have been Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya the Great (A.D. 1519-A.D. 1529).

It was a singular privilege, indeed, which the Sthānikas possessed of going on a deputation directly to the monarch, and of

175. Butterworth-Chetty, *Nellore Inscriptions*, III, p. 1157.

176. *M. A. R. for 1912-1913*, p. 48.

177. *E. C. IX. Ht. 35*, p. 91.

178. *449 of 1918*; Rangacharya, *Top List*, II, pp. 1205—1206.

levelling a charge of high-handedness against officials of the State. Ordinary priests and citizens under the Vijayanagara Government had, no doubt, as we have amply shown elsewhere,¹⁷⁹ the right of direct appeal to the State; but in no instance were the plaintiffs pacified and sent home loaded with presents as in this case!

We have now to enquire into the causes which made the Sthānikas bold enough to go on a deputation to the monarch at Vijayanagara. The fact is that the Sthānikas in the Vijayanagara Empire, especially in those public temples owned and controlled by the State, were servants of the State, and as such were entitled to privileges which were denied to ordinary priests and citizens.

Proof is not wanting to show that the Sthānikas were directly controlled by the Vijayanagara Government. Indeed, the Vijayanagara Government even regulated minute details of worship in temples always, of course, with the co-operation of the representatives of the *nāḍu* or district, and according to the constitutional usage of the country (*pūrvada māryyāde*). We have shown elsewhere how in the reign of king Harihara Rāya II (A.D. 1377—A.D. 1404), Tirumalli Nāyaka, an officer of the Government, settled a dispute between the Sthānikas themselves of the Kāmeśvara temple at Āragalūr. The most equitable judgment given by this Vijayanagara judge reveals, among other things, the fact that the Sthānikas were completely at the mercy of the Vijayanagara Government.¹⁸⁰

More direct evidence is supplied by the following epigraph which affirms in unmistakable terms that the Sthānikas were subordinate to the State. The damaged Koṇḍipalli stone inscription dated A.D. 1521 found in the Mūḷbāgal taluka, tells us that the temple of the god Some (Someśvara?) on the rock of the Kongajanaradinne was in ruins (?), and that the Ares and others (names effaced) re-set up that god, granting for his worship and ceremonies the village of Upukunṭhe. And for the same purpose, *viz.*, for performing worship and ceremonies of the god Someya, the Ares and others appointed Daduga, the son of Candrapaya of the Kauśika *gotra*, as the Sthānika of the god. The appointment of the Sthānika and the re-setting up of the god was done by the Ares and others with the permission of the Vijayanagara viceroy Annadāna Oḍeyar (*Annadāna Oḍeyara nirūpa-vidīdu*).¹⁸¹ This last clause shows that the State controlled the appointment of the Sthānikas in temples.

179. Salestore. *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire*, I, p. 367. Seq.

180. Salestore *S. P. Life*, I. pp. 375-376.

181. *E. C. X. Mb.* 153, p. 110.

The Virabhadra temple stone inscription found at Haralukōṭe, Chāmarājanagara taluka, also illustrates our point. In the record dated A.D. 1523 we are informed that during the reign of the monarch Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya, Jaḍeyāru Modaliyār, the son of Tiruvēngaḍa of Tuṟumudipaka, was the Agent for the *māgaṇi* of the Minister Saluva Govinda Rāya Oḍeyar. Jaḍeyāru Modaliyār set up the god Virabhadra in the village of Haṭṭalakōṭe, granting certain lands for his worship. The record says the following:—
 “All these, and whatever other grants may be made by kings or any one else, will belong to the Sthānika Allappa, the agent for the temple of the god. He will take possession of them, and appointing such temple servants as he wishes, will continue the temple services from time to time (*ēnuṇṭāda sarvasvāmyake arasugaḷu matt-ārādaru dharmmakke koṭṭantā simegaḷu yēnuṇṭāda sarva-svāmyada vellakku Dēvara-sthānakke karttanāda Allappage salu-udu Dēvara-sime ellavannu anubhavisikoṇḍu Devara śrī-kāraḷke [kāryakke] takkanthā tamma manasu bandalli arcakarannu irisikoṇḍu śrī-kāraṇu vēle-vēle naḍisikoṇḍu bahanu*). Further the epigraph continues thus:—“The *pārūpatyagāra* (*i. e.*, the Executive Official appointed by the Vijayanagara State over temples) has no authority to inquire into the affairs of this god, and no one else has any connection with it. Allappa will be the agent of the temple, and no one else has any connection with it. Thus has the charter been given.”¹⁸²

No better evidence than the above is needed to prove that not only was there clear distinction between temple *arcakas* and other temple servants on the one hand, and the Sthānikas on the other, as we have demonstrated in an earlier context, but that the Sthānikas as trustees of the properties of the gods in temples were independent even of the *Pārūpatyagāra*, who was also a high official of the State. This was specially true of the Vijayanagara age.

Further epigraphic evidence may be cited to substantiate our statement concerning the official status of the Sthānikas. A Tamil epigraph at the entrance of the Vyāsarāya *maṭha* at Tirupati, dated A. D. 1523, states that by the order of Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya the Great and his subordinate official Narasimha Rāya Mahārāya, the Sthānika (Sthānatār) of the temple of Tirupati granted a house and certain honours to *the Breaker of the pride of False disputants*, Vyāsatiṛtha Śrīpāda.¹⁸³ The donee was one of the most celebrated Vaiṣṇava

182. E. C. IV. ch. 99, 13-4.

183. M. A. R. for 1920, p. 37.

teachers of the age.¹⁸⁴ According to a damaged Telugu record found in the Īśvara temple at Gōraṇṭla, Anantapur district, and dated A. D. 1533-4, when the Emperor Acyuta Rāya was ruling, Timmappa Nāyudu, the son of Vakiṭi Mallappa Nāyudu, ordered the Sthānikas, citizens, and the temple cooks to revive the processions in the Perumāḷ temple at Gōraṇṭla, which had been neglected till then.¹⁸⁵

That the Kauṭalyan conception of the Sthānika being an official and of the *sthāna* being the office which he held, survived even till the sixteenth century (and after) is proved by the Maḷaleśvara temple record found at Kōḍamballi, Chennappaṭṭaṇa taluka, Mysore State. This inscription dated A. D. 1534 of the time of the same Vijayanagara monarch, relates that Mādarasa, the son of Penugonḍe Aḍayada Vāraṇāsi Śurappa, gave a *dharma sādhana* (or a gift of land) for the god Maḷaleśvara of Kōḍamballi in the Cennappaṭṭaṇa sime. The *dharma sādhana* deed ran as follows:- That the Saragūr village (location specified in detail) which belonged to the nāyakaship of Mādarasa's lord (*oḍeyar*), the Treasurer (*bhaṇḍārada*) Timmappaya, was granted for the god Maḷaleśvara. The object of the grant was patriotic—that *dharma* may be to the Emperor Acyuta Rāya. And the last clause is of particular importance for our purpose. It states that Madarasa granted specified land to Candraśekhara for the office of the temple trustee of Saragur (*yī Saragūrina Sthānikatanakke Candra-sekharage gadde hattu koḷaga hola khaṇḍuga salahudu*).¹⁸⁶ This last statement sufficiently establishes our contention that a Sthānika was essentially the holder of an office in historical times, at the hands of the monarch himself or of the latter's officials.

The Malleśvara temple stone inscription found at Nandagudi, Hosakōṭe taluka, Mysore State, is another record which substantiates our statement. In this epigraph dated A. D. 1559 we are told that when the Emperor Sadāśiva Rāya was ruling, the *Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* Rāma Rāya Tirumala Rāya Mahā-arasu's Agent was Sugaṭūr Timmana Gauḍa-ayya. This last named official in order that merit might accrue to his own parents and his *guru*, presented as a gift the village of Simasandra (location given) in his own Sugaṭūrsime, for the offerings to the god Mallikārjuna at Naṇjigūḷi. The concluding statement in the epigraph affirms that the above village was made over

184. On this renowned personage, read Saletore, *S. P. Life*, I. pp. 260-1, 263, 450 n. (i) II. 5, 126, 142, 226, 267 (n).

185. *183 of 1913*; Rangacharya, *Top List*, I, p. 9.

186. *E. C. IX*. Cp. 53, p. 143.

to the Sthānika Appāji, directing him to continue the worship (*..dharma vāgabekendu Sthānika Apājige pūjeyanu samarpisikonḍu yirendu koṭṭa dharma sādhana*).¹⁸⁷

SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES A.D.

Instances may be multiplied to show that the Sthānikas, who as public officials had wielded great authority in the sixteenth century, continued to exercise equally powerful influence in the seventeenth century and after. As long as the government of the land remained in the hands of one or the other of the Hindu royal families, so long was no attempt made either by the State or its officials to dispossess the Sthānikas of their ancient privileges and powers which Hindu Governments, as the above epigraphs ranging over many centuries undoubtedly prove, consistently recognized, and in some instances deliberately enhanced. So that our survey of the topic under discussion may be complete, we may give just a few instances of the power and status of the Sthānikas in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries A.D. During these two centuries they continued to be trustees and priests of temples; and they co-operated with the other respectable citizens in conferring honours upon worthy people, or in making beneficial regulations on behalf of communities other than their own. And epigraphs likewise prove, as in the earlier ages, that in these two centuries, the Sthānikas were essentially State servants.

We know that Sthānika Linganna Oḍeyar's son Candrasekhara Oḍeyar performed worship of the god Kalleśvara in Kalyagrāma, Māgaḍi taluka, Mysore State, in A.D. 1621, during the *regime* of the Yaḷahankanāḍ Prabhu Immaḍi Kempa Gauḍa, from a damaged stone inscription found in that temple.¹⁸⁸

Another damaged stone record in the Cennkeśvara temple at Chezerla, Nellore district, dated about A.D. 1697—98 informs us that that temple, too, possessed a Sthānāpati whose name is effaced in the epigraph. It is not unlikely that he was called Nāganāthan Timmāvohulu of the Yajus *śakha* and the Kaunḍinya *gotra*, who along with the god Cennakeśava received a village (name lost) as a perpetual gift at the hands of Śrīmat Māradattamgāru.¹⁸⁹

We may mention in this connection that practically in our own century the trustee of the Viṣṇu temple at Śiṅṅamaṇṇūr,

187. *E. C. IX*, Ht, 1 p. 88. It is said that the Sthānikas of the Guṇḍa Brahmayya temple (at ?) were Golla Sthānikas. *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, XX, Suppl. p 4 (1929, Oct.)

188. *E. C. IX*, Ma. 25, p. 54

189. Butterworth-Chetty, *Nellore Inscriptions*, I. p. 229.

Periyakulam taluka Madura district, was a Sthānika. His name was Bhairava Ayyar.¹⁹⁰

An instance may be given of a Sthānika who co-operated with other persons in conferring honours upon deserving citizens. A defaced inscription from Uttanūr, Muḷbāgal taluka, and dated about A. D. 1636, relates that the Sthānika Nāyaka Pallavoḍari Nāyinar, the temple priest of the goddess Kavabba of Uttanūr Maḷavāla, together with the farmers and citizens (*ā-ūra samastha gauḍa prajegaḷu*) granted specified land to Sūryappa under the Idagere tank, evidently for having built that tank.¹⁹¹

The Sthānikas aided social legislation as well. One of the Cennakeśava temple stone inscriptions of Belūr dated about A.D. 1700, informs us that the merchants, the town-mayor, and the Sthānikas (*seṭṭi-paṭṭaṇa-svāmigaḷu Belūru sthānadavaru*) established certain social regulations concerning the washermen caste of the fifty-six countries. Among these regulations was one to the following effect:—That the tax for the washermen caste was 1 *varāha* for a virgin woman and four *varāha* for one whose husband was dead.¹⁹²

As regards the control exercised by the State over the Sthānikas, the following epigraphs not only prove that the Sthānikas were servants of the State, but that the latter also held them in high esteem. A remarkable instance of the solicitude which the State felt for the welfare of the Sthānikas is given in one of the Śravaṇa Belgola inscriptions dated A.D. 1634. This epigraph refers itself to the reign of the ruler of Mysore, Cāma Rāja Oḍeyar. It informs us that the Sthānadavaru (*i.e.*, Sthānikas) of Śravaṇa Belgola, owing to their troubles had mortgaged the endowments made for the worship of Gummaṭanāthasvāmi of Dēvara Belgola to merchant—householders (*varttaka gurustarige*), and that the latter, as mortgage holders, had enjoyed the same for a long time. This state of affairs reached the ears of the ruler of Mysore, who held immediately an enquiry; and sending for the merchant—householders spoke to them as follows:—“We will discharge the debt granted by you to the Sthānikas.” Thereupon the merchant—householders spoke as follows:—“We have for the spiritual welfare of our parents, made a gift, with pouring of water, of the debt granted by us to the Sthānikas.” All having spoken thus, the king caused this grant to be made by the merchant—householders to the Sthānikas. The grant was made in the orthodox manner with

190. *Ep. Rep. S. Circle* for 1907 p. 63.

191. *E. O.*, X. Mb. 115, p. 106.

192. *Ibid.*, V. Bl. 6, p. 46.

the pouring of water in the presence of Gummaṭaṇāthasvāmi, the god, and the *guru* (Cārūkṛti Paṇḍitadeva) being the witnesses. And the ruler ordered thus:—"The Sthānikas shall as long as the moon and sun endure perform the worship of the god and live happily."

But in order to prevent the Sthānikas of Belgoḷa from mortgaging in future the endowments of the temple, the ruler further enacted thus:—"In future any of the Sthānikas of Belgoḷa who mortgages the endowments, or any one who grants as mortgage thereon, shall be an outcaste, and will have no claim to the *sthāna* or office". And in the event of any one violating this injunction, it was further ordered that: "Should any one, in violation of this either give or receive in mortgage, the kings who happen to rule over this kingdom (shall deal with them properly) and carry on the charity of this god as before."¹⁹³

Another inscription of the same date is identical in its contents but is interesting because it corroborates the evidence of the poet Pañcabāṇa mentioned in an earlier context. We have seen that, according to Pañcabāṇa, he was the son of the Sthānika Cennappa of Śravaṇa Belgoḷa. Now this poet's son figures in the record under review dated also A.D. 1634. It is related in this inscription that the king of Mysore, Cāma Rāja Oḍeyar, on hearing that the lands of the temple managers of Belgoḷa had for a long time been mortgaged (*Belgoḷa sthānadavara kṣetravū bahudina aḍau āgiralāgi*), sent for Cennappa, the son of Kempappa of Hosavolalu, and other mortgage-holders (two of them being named), and said:—"I shall pay off the debt on your mortgage," At this Cennappa and the other merchants and Gaṇḍas (nineteen named, including poet Pañcabāṇa's son Bomyappa and poet Bōmmaṇṇa), in order that merit might accrue to their parents, gave up to the mortgagee temple managers, with pouring of water, the mortgage bonds (*aḍahina patra*) in the presence of the god Gummaṭasvāmi and the priest Cārūkṛti Paṇḍitadeva. They wrote this stone inscription recording the release of the mortgage, and stated that whoever claimed the debt that had thus been quitted, would incur the sin of having slaughtered one thousand tawny cows and Brahmans at Kāśi and Rāmeśvaram.¹⁹⁴

From both the above stone inscriptions it is evident that the ruler not only came to the rescue of the Sthānikas in times of distress, but personally intervened on their behalf in order to save

193. *E. C. II.* 352, pp. 155-156.

194. *E. C. II.* 250, p. 106.

the lands of a temple. But it is not to be imagined that the Sthānikas could have their own way in matters of worship and in regard to the question of mortgaging the lands of the gods under their charge. The Government made it sufficiently clear that in case the Sthānikas, as servants of the State, failed to abide by the decision of the ruler, the latter could authorize the conduct of the worship and charity of the god instead, and independent, of the Sthānikas.

Sometime after the flight of the last Vijayanagara ruler Śrī Ranga Rāya, it is mentioned in a copper-plate grant dated A.D. 1669 that the Yaḷahankanāḍ Prabhu Immaḍi Kempa Gauḍa, granted to Namaśśivāya Śikhāmaṇi Dikṣita, with the approval of the Sthānika Lingamayya of the temple of Vireśvara (now Someśvara), remission of certain custom duties and dues to the palace¹⁹⁵. This copper-plate mentions the king Śrī Ranga Rāya as seated on the jewelled throne of Ghanagiri (Penugonḍa). It is not possible to accept this statement except on the supposition that the Yaḷahankanāḍ Prabhu still acknowledged the titular sovereignty of the Vijayanagara monarch, who had by this time fled to the court of the Keḷadi ruler.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the evidence of the above copper plate substantiates the statement we have often made in this treatise that the Sthānikas, as trustees and managers of temples, were high dignitaries under the State.

Before we conclude we may cite the evidence of one more royal order to prove that the Sthānikas were controlled by the State. A *sanad* dated A.D. 1759 of the reign of the king of Mysore, Kṛṣṇa Rāja Oḍeyar III, is of much interest in this connection. It was addressed to Ciṇṇayya, and it intimated the appointment by the king of Bhagavānu Śāstri as the Sthānika in the temple of Nañjanaguḍu in the place of Śankara Dikṣita, and it directed him to see that all privileges pertaining to his office were duly granted to the new man. The Sthānikas were entitled to some wet and dry lands, a house or house site, a portion of the cakes prepared in the temple and some money payment on festive occasions.¹⁹⁷

5. CONCLUSION

From the review of the above stone and copper-plate records and literature ranging over ten centuries (ninth century A. D. till

195. *Ibid.*, IX. Ma. 2, p. 50.

196. Read Salestore, *S. P. Life*, I, p. 142.

197. *M. A. R.* for 1918, p. 59, on the degradation of the Sānis, read Ep. Rep. S. Circle for 1921, p. 92.

the eighteenth century A. D.), we are able to deduce the following in regard to the importance of the Sthānikas in Indian history :—

First seen in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭalya, the word Sthānika generally was applied to an official in the civil administration of the State. This official nature of the Sthānika is seen throughout the long course of Indian history. And what is equally noteworthy is that the office of Sthānika was common to the Jains, the Śrivaishnavas, and the Śaivas. Themselves Brahmans and as orthodox as any section of the priestly class, the Sthānikas never formed any separate caste of their own. They have figured in all walks of life—as managers of temples, trustees of the properties of the deities in them, priests, engravers, *odeyars*, and literary men. But they have always been important as rulers of a *sthāna* (*i. e.*, the office in a temple) and as trustees of the properties of the deities in temples. This trust, it may be noted here, was held by the Sthānikas not in their own name but in that of the gods in temples. It is for this reason that, in the numerous inscriptions we have examined, they are called Sthānikas of particular gods, and not merely Sthānikas of temples. Worship in temples was invariably regulated by them. They were also empowered to appoint servants to conduct the daily worship in temples. In no period of Indian history were the Sthānikas ever identified with any one of the menial temple servants who in Karnāṭaka, Tamil, and Telugu lands were always known by separate names, and who never possessed the powers and privileges of the Sthānikas.

As trustees of the temple properties and of the deities in temples, the Sthānikas received hereditary grants of land from rulers, princes, and the people among whom were Brahmans themselves. Sometimes princes worshipped the feet of the Sthānikas before making grants of land to temples. These grants and endowments in the early days of Kauṭalya were inalienable. But in some periods of later history, because of altered conditions, the Sthānikas were sometimes permitted by their donors to part with their endowments, although in the seventeenth century the Hindu State itself forbade such a practice.

In their official capacity as trustees of the properties of the gods in temples, the Sthānikas were called as witnesses to public grants. They were equal in social rank to the Māheśvaras and the Mahājanas, along with whom they received coins and corn for temples. Together with these and other respectable citizens like the representatives of the *nāḍu* and of the farmers (*gavudagal*), the Sthānikas conferred honours upon worthy persons in the shape of *kaṭṭu-godage* and *dharma-sāsana*. In this connection it is

noteworthy that the Sthānikas granted land as reward to Brahmans as well, for meritorious work done, and sometimes even executed deeds in favour of the Brahmans themselves. Such was the importance attached to the office of a Sthānika that in some periods of the history of Karnāṭaka and southern India, as in the Vijayanagara age, the Sthānikas were independent even of the Executive Officials called *Parupatyagāras* placed over temples by the Vijayanagara monarchs.

The Sthānikas of the temples owned by the State were appointed by the rulers themselves. As high officials in the civil administration, the Sthānikas were privileged to petition directly to the monarchs. They could go on a deputation to the rulers, who addressed them directly, and not as in the case of ordinary citizens, through the Secretaries of the Government. When the Sthānikas failed to do their duty as public servants, they were dismissed by the State and replaced by other Sthānikas. The rulers of their own accord came to the rescue of the Sthānikas, who in times of distress had mortgaged their endowments, and released the mortgage deeds made by the temple trustees.¹⁹⁸

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198. In the light of the irrefutable evidence of the above documents, assertions like the following made in the Government *District Gazetteers* may be summarily dismissed as unhistorical. "The Sthānikas are said to be the descendants of Brahmins by Brahmin widows and outcaste Brahmin women corresponding with Manu's *golaka*. They however now claim to be Saiva Brahmins forcibly dispossessed of authority by the Madhvas, and state that the name Sthānika is not that of a separate caste, but indicates their profession as managers of temples, with the title of Deva Sthānika. This claim is not generally conceded and as a matter of fact the duties in which the Sthānikas are employed are clearly those of temple servants, namely, collecting flowers, sweeping of the interior of temples, looking after the lamps, cleaning the temple vessels, ringing the bells, and the like. They are generally Saivites and wear the sacred thread. Their special deities are Venkataramana and Ganapti. (Sturrock, *South Canara Manual*, I. p. 154. Cf. Thruston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, under Sthānika, Maja, Mali, etc. where equally absurd statements are made.)

I do not know whether the earlier part of the above statements, which forms a libel on a body of officials that has had a brilliant record of public service behind it, has been rectified in the long-promised revised edition of the *South Canara Gazetteer* to which I have myself contributed a chapter on the political history of South Kanara. It is highly desirable that Government, when compiling historical or

quasi-historical accounts of communities, should entrust the work to capable and unbiassed scholars and not to officials who, whatever their ability as Government servants, are not qualified to pass judgment on the antiquity and importance of communities.

Sturrock seems to imply that the claim put forward by the Sthānikas over temples is imaginary, and that they were not dispossessed of their rights by the Vaiṣṇavites. Sturrock's work refers itself to the South Kanara district; and it is best to examine his statement in the light of the religious history of that district.

The truth seems to be that the Sthānikas, at least so far as South Kanara is concerned, were, indeed, forcibly dispossessed of their rights and even of their temples by their religious rivals, who were mostly the followers of the great Madhva. From my personal investigations in Tuluva conducted in the Uḍipi tāluka between the years 1922 and 1925, I am able to give the following details which indicate the priority of the claims of the Sthānikas over those of the Vaiṣṇavites, in the matter of the control over temples. That a change in the possession of temples did not take place peacefully but was characterized by force is evident when we notice one singular point concerning the images in temples. Most of the images of the temples which once belonged to the Sthānikas are now either mutilated or thrown near the precincts of temples which have passed into the custody of the Vaiṣṇavites. (This could never have been the work of Muhammadans, since the South Kanara district never suffered from the depredations of the followers of Islam, not even during the reign of Tipu Sultan.) A few examples may suffice to illustrate this point. In Malpe, which has the other name of Kroḍāśrama, the original image of Mallikārjuna has been thrown into the tank near the temple, and the image of Śankaranārāyaṇa now is seen in the same temple. The famous Ananteśvara temple of Uḍipi proper was another stronghold of the Sthānikas. I have elsewhere shown that there is much proof to maintain that the Ananteśvara temple was originally a Śaivite stronghold (*Ancient Karnataka*, Volume I. p. 449, n. 2.) The Ananteśvara temple, we may note by the way, bears strong resemblance to the famous Somalinga temple at Niṭṭūru, also in the Uḍipi tāluka. And the Niṭṭūru Somalinga temple itself is another example of forcible dispossession. For the Somalingeśvara image of the Niṭṭūru has been thrown out, and an image of Venkaṭramaṇa installed in its place. In Udayāvara, the ancient capital of the Ālupas the image of Mahādeva was thrown out in order to give room to the image of Gaṇapati. And this latter god has replaced Īśvara also at Uppūru in the same Uḍipi tāluka. I here abstain from citing the example of at least twenty *maṭhas* in the neighbourhood of the town of Uḍipi, which were originally owned by the Sthānikas but which have now passed into the hands of the Vaiṣṇavites. In addition to the above examples of temples which had originally belonged to the Sthānikas, we may give a few more

centres of theirs which have now become the property of the Vaiṣṇavites. These are the Trisūleśvara and Śarabheśvara temples at Mangalore, the Someśvara temple at Ullāṣa, the famous Subrahmaṇya temple at Subrahmaṇya, and the temple at Kābbināre, at Hebri.

The enmity between the Sthānikas and the Madhvas seems to have come to a head, according to tradition that is available at Uḍipi, in the time of the famous *guru* Vādirāja (A.D. 1614). It centred round the question of building the famous Kṛṣṇa *maṭha* and the tank near it. The land on which the Kṛṣṇa *maṭha* stands and on which the tank was constructed, belonged to the Sthānikas. Indeed, the Sthānikas claim that the land on which the eight *maṭhas* of Uḍipi were built, formed the property of the Sthānikas whose most powerful spokesmen then were the Niṭṭūru people. It is interesting to note in this connection that in this quarrel between the Madhvas led by the redoubtable Vādirāja on the one hand, and the Niṭṭūru people on the other, the Pañcamas (or the Harijans, as we now would call them) took the side of the Niṭṭūru people against the orthodox sections. And when the Vaiṣṇavites who had installed the Venkaṭaramaṇi image in the place of Sōmalingeśvara at Niṭṭūru, jeered at the latter deity thus in Tuḷu—*Niṭṭūru Sōmalinga bōṇa Tankarā tañjaṇa Tankarā*, the Pañcamas retorted with an equally poignant line in Tuḷu, thus—*Cittupādi Ballālera bēṇṭe koryerō Niḍambūru Ballālera diḍambu gudyerō*, obviously against the Cittupādi and the Niḍambūru Ballāls who had espoused the cause of the Madhva *guru*. The success of Vaiṣṇavites, who were numerically superior, over the Niṭṭūru people was complete. These latter had now really no chance against the former, for these were the days of the supremacy of the Vaiṣṇavites all over southern India and Karnāṭaka. Indeed, the Emperors of Vijayanagara themselves were now Vaiṣṇavites by persuasion. And there was no one who could espouse the cause of the Niṭṭūru people. If this tradition of the great quarrel between the Niṭṭūru people and the Madhvas, which is current in Tuḷu, is substantiated by other evidence, the downfall of the Sthānikas in Tuḷu could be dated to the first quarter of the seventeenth century A.D., when Vādirāja's powerful influence undoubtedly reigned supreme in Tuḷu.

That the Vaiṣṇavites in Tuḷu now own temples which were the property of the Sthānikas there can be no doubt. Nor should we be surprised at it: some of the temples which were for a long time under the Śaivites, seem to have been once Buddhist places of worship, as I have shown elsewhere (*Ancient Karnataka* 1. pp. 379, n. 1, 384.) I have also shown in another work of mine that many of the temples which are in the possession of the Hindus were once Jaina holy places. (Read my *Medieval Jainism*, Chs. II, III, and V.)—B. A. S.